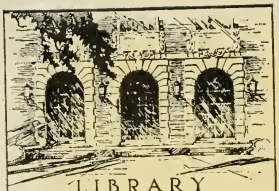

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ALL IN A GARDEN FAIR

The Simple Story of Three Boys and a Girl

BY

WALTER BESANT

AUTHOR OF 'ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN' 'THE REVOLT OF MAN' 'THE CAPTAINS' ROOM' ETC.



IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

London

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PART II.

THE WORK OF THE MAN

CHAPTER I.

THE EMANCIPATION OF HECTOR.

THREE years is a pretty fair slice, a large helping, out of the short span of earthly life. Why, it covers the whole of an undergraduate's career; it converts the newly-entered maiden of Newnham, the fresh-girl, into a high wrangler, at mention of whose name the Senior Moderator raises his cap, and the undergraduates in the gallery shout. In three years Jack may become famous, and Jill may go through all the soft emotions which belong to love and courtship and a trousseau and a wedding-ring, and from a girl become a matron and a mother. There is not the quietest village in the most secluded part of England which does not see changes in three years. Even the last century,

which seems to us so steadfast and so unchanging, had its freaks and its frolics, and could not be trusted for three years together.

As for the village, things were at first dreadful for flatness. All the lads gone away —Will to Shanghai, Allen to London, Olinthus to the glory of Chambers. The weariness which fell upon Claire could be felt; it was like Egyptian darkness or a London fog, a weariness which could not be shaken off. In the morning the girl looked at her father with eyes which confessed the tedium of the day; in the evening they looked at each other with a kind of wonder that it had been got through.

'Is it possible,' asked Claire, 'that Will should have gone to China and Allen to London?'

'All the young men of this country go to China or to London,' said Hector, with the air of one who has made a new epigram, and thinks it ought to be remembered.

'And the girls all wait at home, I suppose?' said Claire with a sigh.

'The statue of Patience, my daughter,' replied her father, 'has her lips closed, her eyes fixed, her head a little on one side, and one forefinger raised. She does not talk, she does not grumble; she waits.'

'And we, too, wait, do we not?' said Claire. 'We wait for the boys to succeed.'

'We wait for more,' replied the man of Revolutions, 'than the success of a boy; we wait, my child, for the Leader of the People.'

Nothing could persuade Claire that Allen was ever going to be a Leader of the People, but yet she waited for great things. Allen was to become a great poet; Will, whatever he could in the way of greatness. Somehow, the two boys, she was perfectly certain, would achieve distinction.

If you come to consider, it is really a very bold thing to pat a boy on the back and bid him to go out into the world and achieve greatness; it is so bold as to seem in the eyes of a native village presumptuous. Shall little Billy become Billy the Great? Ridicu-

lous! Why, what is his father? Who was his mother? Did not his grandfather keep a draper's shop? Billy presume to entertain ambition? As for the lad, aspiring Billy, whether he succeed or whether he fail, it is a magnificent thing to have even attempted, and nothing better could have happened for the boy. And as for the nation, everybody must admit that it is a highly important thing for the nation to get great men, wherever they come from. At the present juncture, for instance, when most greatnesses seem courtesy titles, or Brummagem assumptions, we really do want two or three more great men badly.

Could we not have a School for Great Men, just as they used to have a School of Prophets? They would teach on a large scale exactly what Hector taught the two boys on a small, but with the addition of eloquence. They would be taught to speak; they would be taught to study mankind at first hand and not by reports and journals; they would be taught to write, to reason, to investigate; above

all, they would be taught that remarkable history, the history of Progress ; and in this way they would learn what mankind have already got and what they still want. Think of the interest with which we should regard the appearance of each newly-finished pupil! With what expectations should we gaze upon him as he stepped majestically from the Portals of the College, turned out complete, fully equipped, great enough for anything! Of course he would begin by being presented at Court, and wherever he appeared the people would crowd to look upon him and to hooray. In fact, he would occupy exactly the place of a young king, but with more power than ever young king possessed. Of course, too, he would begin by being created Duke : that is the least you can do for a great man ; but if he should happen not to fulfil his promise, he would be gradually lowered in rank until he reached plain Mister, after which he would be invited to take his seat on the back benches and be quiet for the future.

Let us found such a School.

They waited, this pair, for events which certainly could not occur for some time: yet greatness may be foreshadowed. 'Allen may not,' said Claire, 'step into the first rank all at once.'

'Before the bâton,' said her father, 'comes the tambour.'

'And Will?' Claire asked. 'What is Will to do?'

'He will become rich,' said her father. 'He will become, like so many of his unfortunate countrymen, enormously rich.'

Daily work, especially school work, keeps the thoughts from dwelling too much on hopes and aspirations. They are not wise because they lead one to expect too much, and to cause disappointment where one ought to rejoice. For instance, it is not every one who can be a Fielding, but it is possible for many to rival lesser artists in the same walk. And then—in nine months after the boys went away—an event happened—a stupendous event. Not the

kind of event which they were looking for or hoping. It was not connected with the boys. It was so great an event that it transformed Hector in the eyes of the residents from a little French schoolmaster of no account whatever into a person whose opinions were extremely valuable. More than that, Claire herself, hitherto of no more account than her father, and less in the eyes of some, although she was pretty, and therefore dangerous, became a young lady of great importance. Those who before this event downcried her beauty and whispered spiteful things, especially Olinthus's sisters, now became her most enthusiastic admirers. You think, perhaps, that Hector Philipon re-wrote and published his long-lost poems. No, my friend. First of all those poems were hopelessly lost—even the poet had forgotten them. Secondly, in a suburban village, whose residents are composed entirely of City people, a reputation for wisdom is not to be established by a volume of poems: nay, not by a waggon-load of original literature. Think you that the good

people of Edmonton ever troubled their heads about the opinions and habits of Charles Lamb? Shakespeare would doubtless have been esteemed on account of his great practical knowledge. Besides, he made money. There is only one way by which among these people a man arrives at greatness—he must have made money, or he must have lost money. We have heard that Hector had an elder brother interested in beds. This brother accumulated, in the thrifty French fashion, a pretty considerable fortune. He was a widower, and childless; and one day, greatly to his own surprise, for he was as yet on the sunny side of sixty, he had to stay in his own bed, and presently found himself compelled to retire from business, and change his residence for Père La Chaise. Hector knew nothing of this event until he one morning received a great letter, on blue paper, which had been blotted after the manner of the ancients, viz. by the use of powder. It was from a notary. It informed him of this lamentable event, and requested

him to repair to Paris as soon as might be convenient, with a view to taking over the inheritance.

'He is dead!' Hector wiped the tributary tear. 'Claire, the good brother is dead. You have lost your uncle, whom you have never seen. He would have loved you, my child. The good brother! But for him my poems would never have seen the light. And he is dead! In France we have but one brother. In this country most men have many. Where there are but two, they love each other. He printed my poems for me. When I fled the country he sent me money. Long ago he would have me return; but I was married. I was *père de famille*: besides, what could I do in France? I was too old for the law. I remained. It is ten years since he wrote to me that he wished to embrace me, and that whenever the vast interests of his *magasin* allowed, he would brave the perils of the voyage and come to see me. I expected him from year to year. He did not come. But the intention,

my daughter, remains. *Ce pauvre Achille.* He had not ideas; he was not a Republican; he loved not the people! Even he was *bourgeois*—Monsieur Prud'homme—but of a good heart. Ah! yes, of a good heart. And he is dead.'

He remembered that he was invited to go to Paris without delay. The prospect of seeing Paris once more greatly excited him. Should he go in disguise? No: thirty years had disguised him sufficiently. Besides, the Empire was succeeded by a Republic. Should he take a false name? No: the *mouchards* are dispersed, and Cayenne receives no longer the *déportés.* He would go boldly under his own name. Once more he would stand in the streets of Paris—Philipon of the Barricades.

He started the same evening. No official notice, no recognition at all, was taken of his return: in fact, he felt hurt at the neglect. After so many years of exile, voluntary or compulsory, one might have expected something.

He was detained in Paris three weeks. When he returned, he informed his daughter, without exultation, and even with sadness, that he had become the master of what he called a colossal fortune.

In fact, the sale of the *magasin de literie* and the inheritance of a great many thousand francs made the French master what is called by our neighbours a millionaire; he had, that is, about a million of francs. It looks a good big sum, but is not so big when you translate it into pounds sterling, when from a million it becomes forty thousand, and at three per cent. represents twelve hundred pounds a year. This is not a colossal income in some men's eyes. Enough to provide a young man of the present generation for a few years with champagne for luncheon, dinner, and supper, stalls at the theatre, trifling presents for young ladies on the stage, and light literature. But for this modest household the wealth was indeed colossal. Claire's brain reeled. It seemed as if the possession of an income so immense would be

an intolerable burden. One requires education for a big fortune. Sit down, brother of mine, whose income tax remains small, whatever rate Mr. Gladstone may impose, and consider what you would do if you were to become the possessor, say, of twenty thousand pounds a year. You cannot eat more than you do now; you might drink more, but it would not be good for you; you do not want to dress yourself any finer; you do not wish to dazzle your friends with the splendour of your wife's dresses; you would not desire to give entertainments; you do not want to keep a troop of hulking servants. What would you do, in short, with so great an income? Something of this difficulty presented itself to Hector Philipon. He had been living for many years on an income so small as to be hardly worth naming. His poverty, had it not been for his extremely simple and careful habits and his taste for gardening, would have been intolerable. Now, he was going to possess an income of no less than twelve hundred pounds a year.

'Twelve hundred pounds a year!' Claire cried, with a feeling of bewilderment at the impossibility, the sheer impossibility, of having so much money to spend.

'Trente mille francs!' said her father. 'Mon Dieu! One reads in Balzac of such a fortune. Monte Christo, even, I believe, had more.'

'What shall we do with it?' asked Claire. 'What can we do with such a sum?'

'It is the question which I have put to myself continually, since I comprehended the situation. Let us sit down, my daughter, and consider.'

They sat down with faces full of anxiety.

'You were not brought up, my child, to feel the want of wealth. We were poor; we should continue poor. Sometimes I felt that when I should die there would be the sorrow that you would be left alone—and poor. But there are the boys; one of them I thought——'

'Oh, father!'

'They love you, Claire. Now all is changed.

There is no longer anxiety. We are rich. We ought to be happy, but I feel sad.'

'If it had been only two hundred a year, now.'

'Ah! with two hundred pounds—five thousand francs—a year, one can do so much. One is rich already. But with——' Here he sighed heavily, and stopped short. He did not like to contemplate the income in its hideous vastness.

'What shall we do with it?' repeated Claire. 'Can we give some of it to Allen?'

'To Allen! Would you, child, destroy a young man's career at the outset by giving him the means of support? Never. Never.'

Then he looked round him and said softly, 'Let us gradually accustom ourselves to the possession of wealth. Let us think, Claire, how rich people live. In the first place, they do not live in a cottage. Do you find this cottage grown suddenly small?'

Odd, Claire had never felt it before, but the cottage *was* small.

'I suppose it is small,' she said, with hesitation.

'You perceive it for the first time,' her father replied, gloomily. 'This is the corruption of simplicity which comes with gold. We are dissatisfied with our house. And the furniture, my daughter, does it not appear to you that it is old and worn?'

It was. Claire had never remarked the fact before; but she now perceived clearly that there was no longer any possibility of tracing the pattern of the carpet, that the curtains were dingy, the coverings of the chairs faded, the table rickety.

'The poor old furniture!' said Claire, 'must that go? Yet it is frightfully shabby.'

'The poison is eating into our souls,' her father went on with deeper gloom. 'For twenty years and more I have thought this little *salon* a model of good taste. Claire, when we go into a large house, we will keep the old furniture all in a room by itself, whither we can go and remind ourselves of the past.

If we are to be rich, we must never forget that we were once poor and happy.' He uttered this absurd sentiment with great sadness, and, indeed, his thoughts were gone back to the days when he was poor and yet really happy, with a wife and a little girl. The furniture was fuller of associations to him than it was even to Claire.

'It is where the boys have always sat,' he went on. 'Claire, will they know us again if we have a new carpet? Bah! we are rich.' He meant that it was now necessary to crush sentiment. 'Do rich young ladies,' he asked, 'have such a piano as that?'

Claire could have wept. All the illusions of her youth were slipping from her. No: the piano was a very, very old one; it had been her mother's; it required now the most delicate fingering to keep down the stridency of age.

'My poor piano! I learned to play upon it. But I *should* like a new one.'

'And your dress, my child. Your dress!

Ah! There I am consoled. I would dress thee in silk, in violet, with lace, with jewels, —can there be, anywhere, stuff too beautiful for my beautiful daughter?' He kissed her fingers. 'You shall be Parisienne in dress, as you are Anglaise in goodness.'

'And for yourself, mon père? Your own dress. I am sure that coat is threadbare.'

'It is; like all the friends of poverty, I will discard it. Yet I have loved this coat for many years. I know, Claire,' he answered her eyes, 'I perceive, for the first time, that it is threadbare, and the cuffs are shiny. Had we continued poor, I should not have perceived this for some years to come. Be assured, I will discard the old friend, the old coat.'

'And those two bookshelves—' Claire went on——

They contained the library of the cottage. Two shelves only. A small collection for a philosopher.

'Yes, Claire,' her father said with a sigh. 'There was a time when I dreamed of having

a library. If I had remained in Paris as an *avocat*, I should have become a bibliophile. Now I have two rows of books, and I am accustomed to have no more. It is a scanty library —*Enfin!*' He shrugged his shoulders.

'*Enfin*,' repeated Claire, 'you can buy a library.'

'Marvellous!' He had not yet comprehended half the power of wealth. 'So I can. Not all at once. I will have catalogues sent to me: the booksellers shall send me catalogues, notices of sale, and offers. I will select. I will collect.'

It will be seen that here was already opened a door for the spending of the whole income on one object.

'Then,' said Claire, descending to practical details, 'we shall want a new set of garden tools.'

'And you will want three servants at least,' said her father. 'It will be one of the anxieties of wealth to maintain a cook, a *bonne* and a *femme de chambre*.'

'And a boy to help you in the garden.'

'You will want a conservatory,' said Hector.

'And you will want a new dressing-gown. And, oh! do you think that rich people wear a blouse when they work in the garden?'

'The question of the blouse shall be reserved,' said Hector.

'I suppose,' said Claire, 'that we shall not be expected to eat or drink any more than before?'

'Rich men drink sherry, Chambertin, and champagne, but we will dissemble, Claire; we will pretend not to know this.'

'Ah! yes,' she cried. 'Let us pretend, mon père. With pretence we can manage to find very few changes necessary. We will go into a larger house; we will have new furniture; and I will have fine things, and you shall have books. But we will not give up our simple life.'

'We will not,' said her father. 'You comfort me, my dear; I feared we should have to imitate the manners of the English rich, and

have great dinners every day. But we will feast at times. Remember the great feast we had before the boys left us. Perhaps on another occasion——'

'And you will take me to London sometimes, will you not?'

'You shall go often to London,' said Hector; 'we will take a *hôtel garni*; we will see all the new pieces; you shall go to the Italian opera; there are concerts every day; and the mass—I mean the service—at the cathedral on Sunday. And in the summer we will go to France.'

'Ah! yes—to France.'

'Not to Paris. My old Paris is gone,' he said sadly. 'It is quite gone; the old streets are cleared away; there are broad, straight boulevards. I love it no more. And the language is changed. I speak their speech no longer. *Quoi donc?* Is it that the French of Voltaire is to be clipped of its syllables, and to be spoken with half-closed lips? And the *ouvriers* use a new argot, and they get drunk

à l'Anglaise. No: we will go to the Loire; we will visit the country of Rabelais and of Balzac; we will see Azay-le-Rideau, and Chinon, and Blois, and Tours, and Saumur and Amboise. I saw them once, years ago. We will go there together, Claire.'

'Yes, mon père. And—and—and Miss Billingsworth?'

Hector sprang to his feet.

'The respectable, the honourable Miss Billingsworth? I had quite forgotten her. Since the day of my brother's death I had altogether forgotten her. But I can go to her. I will go at once. I will tell her I leave her. Ah! I leave her. At last. Claire, it is good to be rich, because we need no more of Miss Billingsworth. We can mock at Miss Billingsworth.'

'She was angry,' said Claire, 'because you went away without asking leave. I have had to do your work as well as my own.'

'She is a slave-driver,' said Hector.

'Yesterday she sent for me and said that she was considering the propriety of dispensing

with your services altogether, as I was now grown up and could take the elder classes.'

'She would dispense with my services!' He stamped and jumped about. 'This is the reward of twenty years' work and more. Ingrate! Perfidious Miss Billingsworth! Aha! No. She would dispense. Grr—r—*Très bien—très bien*—she can dispense. Claire, she shall dispense with both of us—both of us—and without delay. Not a day, not an hour will I consecrate again to Miss Billingsworth and her pupils. Monster of ingratitude!'

His first proposal was to go at once—it was then evening—and demand an interview with the Lady Principal, in which there should be enacted a little dramatic sketch or dialogue, with a declamation against perfidy and ingratitude from one actor and the shrinking of guilt from the other. If one or more of the assistants were also present as supers or chorus, the scene would be the more effective.

Claire dissuaded him from this course, but he yielded only on the condition that he was

allowed to go to the school the very next morning and politely tender the resignation of both.

Miss Billingsworth, a lady of great dignity and weight—she must have weighed at least twice as much as M. Philipon—expected, when she gave audience to her Professor of French, to receive a humble apology and explanation with a prayer for forgiveness—absence from duty being a sin of the heaviest in schools. She hardened herself in reply to pronounce sentence of dismissal. In fact, Claire was so good a teacher that she could really do quite as well as her father, and would, Miss Billingsworth thought, come a good deal cheaper. To her astonishment, however, her Professor tendered no apology, offered no explanation, expressed no regret for having deserted his duties for the space of three weeks, and merely announced, in grave and polite manner, that he was anxious to tender his resignation.

Miss Billingsworth replied that probably he had his reasons, and that she had already

made up her mind that a three months' notice——

'No,' interrupted M. Philipon, 'not a three months' notice. It is to-day—now—on the spot—that I resign. Accomplished and respectable mademoiselle,' he added, 'it is with feelings of profound sorrow that I lay at your feet so abruptly my resignation. Believe me, nothing but *force majeure*, the necessity of affairs, would allow me to leave you without finding a more worthy Professor to take my place.'

'What affairs, M. Philipon?'

'My own affairs. The events of the last few days have rendered it impossible for me or for my daughter to teach French any longer. I confess that I always abhorred the work——'

'Monsieur Philipon! You—abhorred—the work?'

'As much, mademoiselle, as I esteemed and respected the fair institutrices among whom I worked. I need not assure you, a lady of your

penetration, that I shall always look back to my friendship with those ladies as a matter of the greatest pride and honour; that, personally, nothing can exceed my respect for yourself, whether in your dignified position as administrator of so vast an establishment, or as the possessor of so many private virtues and graces. I hope, indeed,' he went on, 'in the future to continue this friendship and to retain the respect of all. We propose, mademoiselle, to reside in the village, principally in order to remain near this honoured Asylum of Learning, and to benefit by the example of yourself and your associates.'

What could the man mean? He was going away; he was going to resign immediately. That would be very inconvenient. He abhorred the work; yet he said these most beautiful things in so charming a manner. Why was he going? she asked him again.

'I repeat, mademoiselle, my affairs.'

'It will be most inconvenient, M. Philipon. Indeed, I cannot allow it. Your salary——'

'Mademoiselle, I hasten to lay it at your feet, with the salary of my daughter, from the last quarter. Since we go, we lose the salary.'

While she was mentally calculating the saving effected by this sacrifice, Hector resumed his protestations of regret and esteem, which she heard in a kind of dream. What did it mean?

He was so polite; he flattered with a skill so surprising; he was so fluent, so completely took away her breath, that when he finally begged permission to deliver a Valedictory Oration to all the young ladies, Miss Billingsworth, without thinking what she was doing, granted that permission.

When he was gone she began to have misgivings. What would he say? He had always behaved with exemplary patience, mildness, and meekness, as becomes a French master. Surely he, if any one, might be trusted; yet he confessed that he abhorred the work, and he had just shown an independence beneath his flatteries which was disquieting. On the other

hand, a Valedictory Oration! what could sound better? Many Professors, in her long experience, had come and gone, some of them dismissed for kissing the governesses, and even the maids; others for making eyes at the pretty girls; some for incompetence, some because they wanted more money; some because they lost their tempers, their patience, their heads, or their hearts; others because they fooled away the time and taught nothing; others, again, because they taught more than they were expected or asked to teach. She had had great trouble with her foreign Professors, but none of them, on leaving her, had ever asked permission to give a Valedictory Oration, or left her establishment otherwise than with insolent or insulting language, and with the most lively appearance and outward signs of joy. A Valedictory Oration! It would be a feature in the history of the half-year which could not fail to produce an admirable impression on the parents when they came to hear of it. Once, the curate had given the girls a lecture; but a

Valedictory Oration—never before had that been known.

Hector delivered that Oration in the afternoon. Claire came with him to say good-bye to the girls. The scene, and the occasion, and the appearance of their Professor were effective and imposing. He stood at the desk in the largest school-room, his arms folded, his head thrown back, his eyes gazing steadfastly before him, but above the heads of the girls, waiting for the signal to commence. Beside him on the right were the Lady Principal and the assistant. On the left was Claire, her emancipation made evident by her wearing walking dress and bonnet, while of course the other teachers were in house dress. To her there was a certain humiliation in the scene: she would have preferred a few minutes' friendly farewell with Miss Billingsworth, and then to have kissed a few of the girls. Before the desk were ranged the girls, forty in number. Did you ever consider a bevy of English school-girls out for a walk, or in church, or at a concert, in

school gathering, or anywhere? There are tall and small, pretty and plain, blue-eyed, black-eyed, brown-eyed, hazel-eyed, fat and lean, clever and stupid, clumsy and graceful; all English girls are rosy-cheeked and blooming —that is, nearly all; their eyes are all bright with health—that is, nearly all; they are all well, strong, and full of life—that is, nearly all; but the general effect you will observe to be extremely disappointing; it is an effect of plainness rather than one of beauty, which one would naturally look for. The reason is that beauty is so much a thing of cultivation: it is the product of Art, which a girl has little or no chance of practising until she leaves school. While *in statu pupillari*, her Good Looks are so much raw or rough material—out of Good Looks Art produces Beauty. There was a pause of a minute or two, while the girls arranged themselves before the desk. Then the orator turned to the Lady Principal.

'If you please, Monsieur Philipon,' said Miss Billingsworth.

Hector changed his attitude. He bent his head, and regarded the faces before him with a tender interest which the girls had never before witnessed in their Professor. In fact, since he had made up his mind to resign he had discovered that Girl was, after all, Woman, only young, and therefore lacking some of the divine graces which accompany Womanhood, especially at that age which Venus made up her mind should be her permanent time of life. Those eyes of his, cold, hard, and unrelenting in the pursuit of the past participle, now beamed upon them kindly, sympathetic, and—admiring. Yes, as each girl in turn met that look she grew at least an inch in self-esteem, because she perceived that M. Philipon admired her. You must not overdo this most effective method of commencing an oration. I once knew a French preacher with a great reputation for eloquence, who always began in this way. After gazing at his congregation in silence for a minute or so, he proceeded to shake his forefinger encouragingly (yet not without convey-

ing some sense of terror) towards three, at least, of the four cardinal points, and then he said, 'Mes enfans.' The effect produced could not be equalled by the finest flow of words.

The Professor changed his attitude a second time. He stood erect; he raised his head; he thrust his left hand into his waistcoat, and laid his right heavily upon a pile of French grammars, dictionaries, and exercise books—the tools of his craft. And then he began, his voice rolling about the room like the soft low notes of an organ.

'Mesdemoiselles,' he said slowly, as if the mere utterance of the word afforded him pleasure. 'Mesdemoiselles,' he repeated, with a gaze of catholic and univeral affection which sank deep into every heart, even the youngest. 'The moment has at length arrived when I am permitted to resign the principal duties with which you have hitherto associated my name. I do not disguise the fact that I regard this moment as one of supreme happiness. Is it that I desire to cease from beholding you?

Never. It is that I lay down for ever the harsh *rôle* of the Professor. *Mon Dieu*! I have played it too long. You now behold in me, for the first time, a son of that glorious nation which regards gallantry and worship of the fair sex as the chief duty as well as the chief solace of human life. Once more I look upon every woman as a goddess.' Here the Lady Principal coughed uncomfortably, the younger teachers blushed, the elder girls looked with questioning surprise one upon the other. So the ox-eyed Hêrê might have looked at the divine Aphroditê and wondered what men could find to admire in her; but the younger girls gazed at their French master with eyes like saucers for lack of comprehension.

'It has been,' Hector resumed, 'a cruel thing to be your critic when I would rather have been your admirer.' Miss Billingsworth began to wish he would stop; but still, the Valedictory Oration, it would be a really magnificent thing to speak of. 'But I am your critic no longer. Behold! I tear off the robe

magistrale.' He made as if he was pulling off his coat violently. 'I hasten, I fly, I gallop, to assure you that while my devotion remains, my censorship has ceased. Continue, dear and gracious ladies, without fear of me, to write French according to your own pleasure. What you please must be right. Mingle your genders, exchange your accents, confuse your participles. As Frenchman, as a student of a noble tongue, one may grieve; as a man, I accept your syntax without reserve, or, as I accept your smiles, with the gratitude due to beauty and to youth. Charming angels, whose happy lot it is to emerge from these walls—they have all the seclusion with none of the rigours'—here he bowed to the right—'of a convent—angels entrusted with the task of tearing the masculine heart from the pursuit of wealth, let me in your presence take these engines of discord'—he seized a French grammar—'and destroy them.' Here he tore it down the back and hurled the fragments on the floor, so that the astonished girls jumped

every one right out of her shoes, and turned first pale and then red, and first shuddered and then smiled, and first looked at the Lady Principal and then at each other, and first their heads sunk with terror, after the manner of girls at witnessing a deed of violence, and then their hearts leaped up with admiration, as is also their manner in presence of a hero. He had torn up a French grammar before the very eyes of the Lady Principal! Could this be, in very truth, their meek, their gentle, their much-enduring French Professor—this Hector, whose name seemed so much at variance with his nature? 'I throw it at your feet,' he said. 'And this'—he seized a dictionary and treated it in the same manner—'and this'—a book of exercises followed. 'And now once more I am a man.' He folded his arms and looked around him with the air of Olympian Zeus, or Louis Quatorze himself. Miss Billingsworth was now horribly frightened, but did not dare interfere. The teachers, observing her terror, endeavoured to assume a smile of pity or contempt. But

the elder girls saw through the thin disguise, and they enjoyed the thing.

'Henceforth,' said Hector, 'I can abandon the wretched pretence with which I sought to console myself. I said—I ask your pardon—Girl is not Woman. I said that, in correcting the faults of Girl, I am still free to worship Woman.' Here Miss Billingsworth stepped forward, but he waved her back imperiously, and the elder girls burst into a peal of laughter, and the teachers would have laughed, but dared not. 'That was my subterfuge. I renounce it. I cast it from me. Henceforth I declare, and will maintain *en preux chevalier*, that at every age in life, even in the Pension, woman is without fault.' At this daring statement Miss Billingsworth sat down, and for the first time in the memory of the oldest pupil burst into a loud, spontaneous, and contagious fit of laughing. She laughed as merrily as any of the girls who laughed in chorus; she laughed as long as the youngest teacher, who took the lowest classes; they all laughed

together, young and old, one with another. Because, if you think of it, the chief work that goes on in every school, and especially in a girls' boarding school, is perpetual admonition, with correction, punishment, censure, reprimand, nagging, and fault-finding. Wherefore they laughed long and loud. But the Valedictory Orator did not laugh. He folded his arms and looked benignant. When the laughing had subsided a little, Hector went on, unfolding and spreading his arms as if he was ready to embrace the whole school. '*Enfin.* Behold in me no longer your Professor, but your lover.'

'Oh! good gracious!' cried the Lady Principal.

'The lover of the sex adorable.' He folded his arms again and bowed his head reverently, as if every girl before him was a queen. And he looked so comely with this newly-assumed gallantry, his bright eyes and neat figure, that, in spite of his white hair, not one among them all, from the smallest smudger

of copy-books to the Lady Principal herself, but would willingly have kissed him there and then.

'There remains,' he said, 'one thing more. Let me ask, Mademoiselle, one last favour. It is a priceless favour. Nothing less than, in leaving you for ever, to kiss your hands!'

'Oh! good gracious!' cried the Lady Principal a second time. But no one could refuse so simple a favour. She was, in fact, the first to extend her hand, feeling that this was an occasion for a display of Deportment which did not often occur. Therefore, when Hector solemnly bent his head and raised those virginal fingers to his lips, she slid back with a majestic courtesy and bowed exactly like the Queen at a Reception, or at least as much like the Queen as the short time allowed for reflection would permit. The girls laughed no longer. They were all going to have their hands kissed, and some of them blushed, thinking of the ink upon their fingers. At such a moment one would wish at least to

have a spotless hand; and some of them who had read romances marvelled that Miss Billingsworth, instead of graciously presenting her fingers, had not flung the daring aspirant from her, saying, in the language of the novels, 'Unhand me, sir!'

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Well, the whole forty, besides the teachers, had been kissed, and their French master was gone, with Claire.

Then Miss Billingsworth, a little ashamed, retreated to her own room; and the girls, feeling sad, fell to confessing, each to the other, how much they had always loved their French Professor, how vastly superior he was to their other professors, particularly Signor Altosoprano, their singing master, who stamped his feet and tore his hair. How they should always mourn his loss; by what slight but unmistakable signs he had always manifested his preference for herself, the speaker; what he had said, how was his manner of saying it, and how they felt when he said it. No more

work was possible that day. There was a holiday. They had Sally Lunns and buttered toast for tea, and most of the girls cried when they went to bed.

Next day there was reaction. The teachers were irritable; all were ashamed of the hand-kissing; cold water was poured freely down everybody's back; wet blankets were applied; a vast quantity of girls incurred punishment; enthusiasm was killed; generous sympathy was quenched; and in private with her teachers Miss Billingsworth regretted that she had allowed the Valedictory Oration, and expressed a fear that some of the sentiments were libertine in tone.

A few days later the new French master came. He was young, but hard of manner and testy. He began badly, and he kept it up as he began. So that the girls of that school continued to lament their Hector.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT MONEY CAN DO.

I DO not suppose that any permanent harm was done to the morals or to the happiness of the young ladies by the Valedictory Oration and the hand-kissing. But next day a dreadful rumour was spread abroad in the village. The little Frenchman, it was said, whom all believed so innocent and harmless, had been dismissed the school in disgrace. Some averred (on the best authority) that he had gone there in the evening, intoxicated with his own claret, and had insisted on kissing all the girls, and all the teachers, and all the maids, in the actual presence of Miss Billingsworth. Others declared that he had not kissed all, but only the prettiest out of the older girls, with the youngest teacher. Others, again, said that he

had not committed this awfulness openly, but in secret, or behind doors, curtains, shutters, and in cupboards, but that the great zeal of an assistant housemaid witnessed and reported his doings. Others, again, declared that there was no kissing at all, but that he had ventured to offer his hand to the Lady Principal, who indignantly dismissed him on the spot. Then grew up, towards the afternoon, a complete and fully grown romance, in which it was explained that the offence was the kissing of one young lady only, but that one a parlour boarder, and an heiress of surpassing loveliness, whose father had made large sums in jute. The mention of jute and of money fired the imagination of the village, and in an hour or two a perfect little drama had grown up, with action and dialogue complete: How the gardener had observed the crime, and went immediately to the operator in jute—the young lady's father—and revealed it, for a large sum of money. How the indignant parent came to the school and said, 'Miss Billingsworth, either

the Frenchman leaves this day, or your parlour boarder leaves. I give you this choice.' This thing with variations was whispered from ear to ear, or spoken aloud, or proclaimed from the housetop, until there could be no doubt whatever upon the subject; and Sir Charles asked what was, after all, to be expected of a Frenchman. Then the butcher, the baker, the milkman, and the village draper, examined their books, to find out what, if anything, was owing. There was nothing. Then they laid their heads together, and whispered their own version of the story, which was not so involved, and did credit to their knowledge of human nature. And all that day, which was the most horrible and barefaced thing of all, M. Philipon might have been seen walking about with his daughter, lifting his hat to everybody, smiling, and as cheerful, to outward appearance, as if he was not disgraced, ruined, and his character gone for ever.

'And what,' asked Olinthus's sisters, 'what will our brother say now?'

'Your brother,' said Mrs. Gallaway, 'will no doubt have the good sense to perceive that the shameful conduct of the girl's father releases him from any promise or engagement whatever. At least, I hope so, though there is no telling what the infatuation of a young man may lead him to do.'

'But what will they do? They must starve.'

'Unless,' said the British matron severely, 'the father goes back to his own country, and the girl goes out for a governess, if anyone will have her after what has happened.'

She had already begun to teach, but that was not exactly the meaning of Mrs. Gallaway's kindly speech. There was, in fact, among the young ladies resident in this village, a bogey or spectre, ever visible, and threatening them—that they would have to 'go out for a governess,' that is to say, to take a situation in some family and teach, the profession of teaching being regarded as in many respects inferior to that of menial service.

'Let us, my dears,' she continued, 'be very

careful to do no more than to bow distantly to the young person if we meet her.'

A week passed. M. Philipon walked about, neat, smiling, and cheerful, observing none of the glances that were cast upon him by the elder ladies, the coldness of the gentlemen, and the down-dropping of eyes by which the younger ladies spoke their abhorrence of kissing in all its branches. Indeed, his head was much too full of other things, and he did not even notice them. And then happened a most remarkable thing. Nothing less, if you please, than a complete reversal of the first story. They said now, that there never had been any kissing at all; that M. Philipon was not dismissed, but had resigned; that the reason of his resignation was neither more nor less than the fact that he had come into a fortune. How this second report originated, with whom, from what information, I have not been able to ascertain; but it ran like wild-fire from house to house, from room to room, from cabin to kitchen, insomuch that there was not a man,

woman, or child in the place but was holding up hands to admire, wonder, believe, disbelieve, and be astonished.

'I don't believe a word of it,' said Mrs. Gallaway. 'But, my dears, it may be true. If you meet the girl, you may smile.'

The rumour did not vanish like the first; it was a persistent rumour, it remained; it became certain that there was an accession of wealth. 'Doubtless,' said Sir Charles, 'some pitiful thousand or two; not a solid British fortune. Well, I do not grudge it. He was always respectful, well-behaved, and sober. He deserves it, Skantlebury.'

How much was it? Everybody had it on the best authority that it was so much; but nobody agreed; it was, however, allowed to be something more than a pitiful thousand or two; and most people believed in the solidity of the sum. It was now stated that the fortune was derived from the death of M. Philipon's only brother, and that he was a great merchant, somewhere in France. Great merchants do

not always fail, out of the City, and the report gained credence.

'If it is true,' said Mrs. Gallaway, 'it is wonderful. My dears, if you meet the young lady be sure to stop and shake hands with her.'

It presently became certain that the report was true, because workmen appeared in one of the best houses of the village, and furniture began to come from London, and M. Philipon with his daughter went to town every day, and it was learned that they were going to the large house, which had a better garden and better conservatories than any other house in the village.

'It must be true,' said Mrs. Gallaway. 'My dears, this is very good news for Olinthus. He will be much pleased. Write and tell him. And if you should meet dear Claire, ask her to come in and take a friendly cup of tea.'

Quite beautiful it is to mark the rise in esteem which follows an improvement in income. The little Frenchman lived in a cottage: no one cared about the little French-

man, no one called upon his daughter. M. Philipon was going to take a large house, and was furnishing it and was buying books and all sorts of things for it. He was rich. Thereupon there arose quite a new and most generous appreciation of M. Philipon's character, his wisdom, his benevolence, his virtue.

Again, it is most wonderful to observe how the rumour of riches flies abroad, so that all over the country—yea, and in distant isles—a rich man, or one thought to be rich, becomes swiftly known. It was not long before all those, over the length and breadth of England, who wanted support for societies, hospitals, and committees sent circulars; men who supported schools, aged widows, institutions, orphanages, free breakfasts, runs into the country, dinners for the indigent, teas for the intemperate, coffee for the convivial, savings-banks for the thriftless, churches for those who stay outside, funds, subscriptions, donations, needs, wants, requirements, necessities, clamorous callings and Great Causes, began with unanimity and

universal consent to hurl tracts, send circulars, forward statements, post letters, write appeals, despatch invitations, persuade with eloquence, terrify with threats, exhort with exhortations, and drive with warnings. He must send large help, his honour was concerned, his justice was involved, his religion required it, his benevolence would be satisfied with nothing short of substantial help, his sympathies commanded it, his patriotism, principles, pride, and prudence, his personal character, gratitude for the past, duty to his children, and his hopes for the next world—all loudly commanded, ordered, and insisted on this help.

Next, every new company who issued a circular sent it to Hector, so that he was invited to drop his money in steamship companies, to throw it away in mines, to give it to the Americans for bogus railway shares, to bestow it upon needy directors in trams, flams, and shams of all kinds, to take shares in the stock of companies formed to prevent a tradesman from becoming bankrupt. As the cir-

culars followed upon one another, Hector thought the times of the Mississippi shams were come again, and looked daily to hear of some great collapse.

After this the tradesman began to have his turn; and then came from all parts of London and the country, circulars and advertisements of everything known and in use, or possible to be devised by the wit of man, from a corkscrew to a torpedo. And every man in England who was hard up or had a hard-up friend, wrote to him for money in loan, with or without security. They wrote from the sweet seclusion of innocent Arcadia, or from that famous hostelry, the Pig and Whistle, of Drury Lane; they all told a most moving story; they all showed a dreadful monotony in the wording.

'Claire,' said Hector, 'one understands now why the poor think better of mankind than the rich.'

And the village butcher was sympathetic, expecting that, with larger wealth, there would be greater consumption of mutton and beef,

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larger joints and primer cuts; and the milkman spoke up boldly concerning cream; and the baker thought that more bread would be wanted; and one and all began to touch a respectful forehead with submissive forefinger when M. Philipon passed their way.

Who would believe it? This extraordinary man made no difference at all in his mode of living: he ate no more beef, he continued to cultivate his lettuces, though in a larger garden, he went on with his soup and his salad. There were differences, though of these the butcher and the baker recked not. Not only was there a better house, with new furniture, a new piano, and new books, but there was also a gradual improvement in the quality of the claret. And the ladies remarked that while Claire dressed no better—because nobody could ever dress better than Claire—she now wore dresses which cost money, and a great deal of money. Who will not sympathise with the poor girl? Hitherto she had designed, cut out, and made with her own fingers every dress she wore;

now, for the first time in her life, she was able not only to design a dress for herself, but also to have it made, and out of the most becoming things, without regard to money. More than most girls, she loved beautiful raiment; more than most, she had all her life ardently desired things which she saw adorning her richer sisters because she thought how delightful it must be to wear them. She bought, now, the softest and the most delightful stuffs ever manufactured, and had them made up into dresses which fell in flowing curves—dresses such as refuse to look well on any but a beautiful girl —dresses which made her father's eyes soften with parental pride and joy. What better way of spending her money than to make herself as beautiful as nature allowed?

Diverse are the functions of sweet maidenhood; for there are girls whose work is in the house—housewifely; and these, in all generations, will become wives and mothers; and there are others who love the work that lies outside the house, and these, in the next gene-

ration, will become lawyers, doctors, and priestesses. Some are born to be nurses, some to be dressmakers, some to be cooks ; but these are very few. Some are born to run after the last new thing, to worship the latest apostle, and to revere the last new gospel. But some, among whom was Claire, are born to be beautiful, gracious, and sympathetic. In the hands of such women, some men develop noble ambitions, some show themselves at their best, and a few recover that ancient virtue which used to be called goodness. Now to be gracious and sympathetic, as well as beautiful, you *must* be nicely dressed ; a dowdy cannot be gracious. What is the use of sympathy when your frock doesn't fit? Of what worth is beauty badly dressed?

Another thing that Claire began to buy in great quantities was music. Nobody has any idea how stinted poor girls too often are in the matter of music. It is really almost as bad as gloves. Now, at last, Claire could buy what she wanted, and more than she wanted. She

began at length to learn something of the wealth of music. Hitherto she had only played, now she began to study.

Again, she could sometimes leave the dull village and go to London with her father. She had not been to town since the boys went away. There are always shows to see—you have no idea what a quantity of shows there are to see in London every day; some of them interesting, some curious, some ingenious. They went to a good many shows in the first days of their accession to wealth. In the old days, when she went with the boys, she used to sit in the pit, now she went to the dress circle, which made her enjoy the show very much more.

And then she had nothing in the world to do. I have remarked that although many young ladies moan and lament because they have nothing to do in the world, and many will work for themselves and manfully tug a volunteer oar, those who have no choice but must needs work or starve presently get an

anxious look, a line across the forehead, a contraction between the eyes, a setting of the lips, a cloud across the brow. Sure and certain I am that whatever be the spread of woman's education, one thing you will never teach her —to love the earning of her own bread. I dare say men would rather not work for wage, but they must; and those who do not, take to drinking and mischief.

No one, indeed, could possibly believe what a great big lump of happiness was conferred upon Claire with this colossal fortune of twelve hundred pounds a year.

Even the Philosopher, her father, confessed that, besides the freedom from Girl, he found it delightful beyond expectation to be able to buy whatever his modest habits and simple way of life desired.

It remains to be told, if it is worth the telling, how the residents received M. Philipon into their own circle on the Village Green, and how they related—all except Mr. Colliber, who for reasons of his own was now seldom among

them—the story of their failures, and how they all met with the greatest encouragement to go on; and one at least among them, Mr. Massey, senior, felt so much encouraged that he began to unfold all his secret projects and certain methods for making a fortune; how he proved mathematically that each one was a fortune in itself, and wanted only a preliminary advance by way of meeting the expenses of the shove off; how the good Hector listened with the greatest apparent interest, and even suggested branches and developments, not originally perceived by the projector, which would lead to wealth incalculable; how Mr. Massey, whose heart was young though his head was white, began once more to build castles in the air, to kick over the basket of eggs, to spend in imagination the corn in the blade; and how, finally, when it came to the real point, this immense sympathy was found to have no solid foundation, and not a penny of backing up could Mr. Massey obtain for any one of his undertakings.

'No Frenchman, Sir Charles,' observed the

Projector, 'deserves to be trusted with a fortune. His only mean idea is how to keep it.'

'I cannot, Massey,' said Sir Charles, 'go so far as to say that no Frenchman deserves a fortune. But doubtless there are few who do, and our friend Philipon, though a most worthy person and sagacious to a certain point, certainly lacks the spirit of enterprise which has made us—what we are.'

CHAPTER III.

THE DAWN OF GREATNESS.

Olinthus Gallaway was destined to have Greatness thrust upon him. The history of his rise and splendour will be here related, partly because it belongs to the story, and partly for the benefit of young City men who may be inclined to follow his example if they can, and so arrive at riches as great as the City heart can desire. In this respect the City is large-hearted.

After the departure of his rivals, Olinthus lingered for some time in the village, thinking that perhaps he might, in their absence, make running for himself. He had an extraordinary belief in himself; he thought that the mere aspect and contemplation of him would subdue

the feminine heart; in a little while a reconsideration of the judgment in the case would be held; this could not but be favourable to himself. As for the other two, one was gone to China; who ever comes back from China? The other was a mere literary scrub. Both as good as clean out of the way. Allen would, perhaps, turn up to borrow half-crowns. How can a literary man make position or money? Why, said the man of business, he has actually got to do his own work with his own hands, just as if in the oil trade money was made by rolling the casks ashore. 'What gives a man position,' said Tommy, 'is to make other beggars do the work and to pocket the dibs yourself.' The whole of political economy lies in this maxim.

He made, however, little apparent progress in his suit. It was discouraging when he called in the evening to be received always by the young lady's papa, and it was unkind of Claire to refuse to let him walk home with her after church.

He then realised the first part of his ambition: he took chambers in town, and he joined a West-End club—proprietary—quite a new club, and beautifully furnished: and in those days he went home from Saturday to Monday, and called at the Cottage on Sunday afternoon, in order to let Claire know what a brilliant position he was acquiring.

'Our chairman,' he said, speaking of the club, 'is a lord. I have several times seen him in the smoking-room. Last Wednesday I handed him the evening paper. He thanked me.'

'That must have been gratifying to you,' said Claire.

'Very,' he replied. 'It makes a man feel that he really is out of this beastly village and in Society. As for that, a Partner in a really steady thing is sought after, mind you.'

'I can quite believe that,' said Claire.

'Yes: I am asked into tip-top circles in the best wholesale line. As for the girls, Claire, they just throw themselves at a man. I've

taken private lessons in dancing. Not that I mean anything serious, you know; but it's pleasant, you know, and the girls are pretty, you know, and that. As for me, all I look forward to is to have my little fling, and then to give up the gaieties of London and take a quiet villa and have a garden.'

That was his simple dream to begin with. We shall see how it changed.

'And to think,' said the sisters of Olinthus one at a time, and one after the other, 'to think that a City partner like Olinthus should run mad after a half-French girl without a penny. Why, he might have looked as high as he pleased after awhile.'

'And a young man,' sighed his mother, 'endowed with every grace! Yes, my dears, it is a sad pity.'

'Only a governess,' they sighed responsive like a chorus.

'And to think that he, when he was told, actually and impudently told, to wait three years, instead of flinging out of the house,

should meekly sit down and consent! My dears, I have not patience with men. He ought to have more dignity.'

He was so much in love that he had no dignity left at all, and began to get thin, and to show other signs of unrequited affection; and what would have happened to him I know not but for a thing which happened, which effectually turned his thoughts away from love.

Mr. Colliber, honourable as so colossal a failure as his own undoubtedly was, did not take comfort in his glory. He lamented the old days. Had he been able to show his face in the City he would have begun all over again the game which he had played so well that he left no successor. Although he was now out of it altogether, he followed the money market with as much interest as when he seemed to control it. He was still in imagination in the Inner Ring; he could read the meaning of rise and fall; he could read between the lines of company prospectuses, dividends, and statements made by the chairman; he saw the most

magnificent chances offering themselves to one with understanding, and they had to be let alone. He carried these operations through in imagination; he covered acres of paper with calculations; he estimated his fancied gain; he became once more a millionaire; and the only man in the village with whom he cared to talk was Mr. Massey, the dreamer of dreams and projector of schemes, whose brain was busy though his hair was white. Mr. Colliber listened to his ideas, and informed the ingenious projector how his scheme might be worked into a company with money—for the promoters.

Presently Mr. Colliber formed a project for himself—quite an innocent and kindly project. He cast his eyes upon Will Massey, and he considered that boy with a view to possibilities. He was a clever lad, quick to comprehend, with a good memory, a good eye, and a tenacious purpose. He was also a bold lad, and he was poor; he was, further, ambitious, and he had an excellent manner. Of such as Will Massey are great speculators and successful

financiers made. How if he were to inoculate the lad with the true spirit, lead him on, train him, and launch him upon the City to be a successor to himself?

He nursed this thought in his brain for two or three years. Just as he was about to open the subject, Will was ordered to China, and so lost his chance of a short road to fortune.

After a time he began to consider Olinthus. Of course he never thought of Allen at all. What have hawks and kites to do with young men of books? Could he, by temptation, golden promises, and training, make of young Gallaway a speculator? He did not look clever, to be sure; but he might be taught. And then he ardently desired to possess money; as he had none he wished to appear as if he had; he dressed carefully, and had an eye to appearance and effect. Now appearance and manners are nowhere so useful as in the City. Olinthus affected the air of one who hath great possessions; he spoke with grandeur of their House, which Mr. Colliber knew to be a

very little House; his rings and chains were solid; his clothes were well cut; his hat was glossy; his linen *soigné*; his boots and gloves in good condition. Finally, he had an air of assurance and self-confidence.

'He is a snob,' said Mr. Colliber, thoughtfully, 'but he might pass for a clever snob. The other young fellow was a gentleman and might have passed anywhere for an—an—ah!—an honest man.' He was quite alone, so that he allowed the admission. 'He would have persuaded people. This man will not easily persuade anybody, but he may dazzle them. He will not seem clever, but he may seem solid. After all, it is just as useful to make people envious as to make them friends.'

He began to seek out opportunities for cultivating the young man. This was not at first easy, because Olinthus was at a stage of development when he had no sympathy with the bankrupts of his native village. But Mr. Colliber persevered. He engaged him in con-

versation about the oil business, and showed that he, too, knew the secrets of that mystery. What trade was there—what business, mystery, or craft of the whole City that Mr. Colliber did not know completely? Then he made Tommy—still artless, for all he was two-and-twenty, and thought he was fifty in worldly wisdom—talk about his ambitions. And Mr. Colliber contrived to let him see how very small and paltry these were. After these conversations, the young man was astonished to think how much he had told about himself, how small he felt, and how little he had got out of Mr. Colliber. He lived, being a widower without children, in one of the large houses of the place; he invited no one into his house; he went to no other house; he shut himself up with his money-market articles, and worked at his imaginary *coups*.

One evening he astonished Olinthus by inviting him to take his cigar in his house. He led his guest into a dining-room, plainly furnished with a table, a sideboard, a cellaret, five

chairs, and nothing else. No pictures, no books, no sofas, nothing luxurious at all. Mr. Colliber had parted with all these when he sold his furniture in Kensington Palace Gardens; he never wanted them, or cared about losing them; the furniture of a City office was all that he ever wished to possess. On the mantelshelf was a box of cigars.

'Take one, Gallaway,' said Mr. Colliber; 'you will find them better than your own. They ought to be. They cost seven pounds a hundred, twelve years ago. I brought my cigars away with me. Will you take a glass of wine? I saved part of my cellar, too. The Gladstone claret was sold for the benefit of the creditors. Would you like a glass of '51 port, or some Lafitte, or some Chambertin?'

'Port for me,' said Tommy, still under the impression that port, sherry, and champagne are the only wines worthy the consideration of a gentleman.

He took two glasses, and was good enough to find the wine silky on the palate, but want-

ing in bone, phrases he had heard, but imperfectly understood.

'Well,' said Mr. Colliber, 'never mind about the port. Let us talk business.'

'Business, by all means,' said Tommy, taking a third glass. 'I'm a business man.'

'For some years, Gallaway,' said Mr. Colliber, 'I've had my eyes upon you three boys.' His eye upon his visitor at the moment was unpleasantly like the eye of a hawk upon a little bird. 'Young Massey, I confess, appeared to me the best of you. I always thought a great deal might be made of Massey. He is a boy with brains; yes, if I had got hold of Massey, I am certain I could have made a great man of him. But Massey is gone; gone away from London, where the money is. What a fool! WHAT A FOOL! As for you, I confess I have my doubts, and I am not at all certain whether the trouble I am going to take will be made up to me by your success. But we can try; if you like we can try. As for young Engledew, he is a contemptible idiot.'

'He is,' said Olinthus complacently; 'he always was. You hardly believe it, but he used to make verses—actually, verses, in the train going up to business.'

'As for yourself, then?'

'As for myself,' said the young man; 'I don't know what you mean by making great men. I've got into a very good thing already, but I suppose there is always something better. And if you've got anything better to offer, Mr. Colliber, that's safe and would not lead to failure, and not being able to show your nose in the City, of course I shall be glad to hear it.'

This was said with dignity, because he resented the injurious comparison with Will.

'You shall hear it; perhaps you will succeed in understanding it.'

'Look here, Mr. Colliber; none of your financial rigs, you know. My uncle is a steady old file. He wouldn't hear of it.'

'Don't be a fool, Gallaway, but listen. I know,' he continued, 'about your partnership.

It is a safe little thing, and you've got a small share—a fifth, isn't it? That brings you three or four hundred a year. In ten years or so you may be promoted to a third share, and then you will draw seven hundred or so; that is, I believe, the state of the case.'

Tommy nodded: that was the exact state of the case.

'What I am thinking of,' said Mr. Colliber, 'is very different work; work which, if you can manage it, will give you as much in one year as you could save in twenty; work which requires no capital; which you can do secretly, and which will not interfere with your partnership.'

'Of course,' said Olinthus, 'you mean what you used to do.'

'Not quite'—Mr Colliber smiled—'not quite what I used to do. Later on you will perhaps understand. I will tell you, however, something of what I did. Five-and-thirty years ago I was a clerk in a wine merchant's office. I was twenty-four years of age: I had

no friends or family influence to help me. I was pretty certain to remain a clerk. Then I had the good luck to fall in with a man who began to teach me things, just as you have fallen in with me.'

'What did he teach you?'

'Before I met him I knew nothing. I was even such a fool'—he looked quickly at his listener—'as to imagine that fortunes can still be made in the City by the profits of a junior partnership.'

'Well,' said Tommy, 'if they are not made that way, I should like to know——'

'Precisely; you are in the same position that I was. Well, I may possibly—I say I *may*—I do not promise, but I *may* be able to teach you what my old friend taught me. He is now, I fear, gone to a place where stocks and shares are not dealt with.'

'Was it any good when you learned it?' asked the pupil. 'What did it come to when you totted it up?'

'Think now'—he had risen, and was

standing on the hearth-rug and shaking an impressive forefinger and looking his listener in the face with his cold, keen eye—'think: I was four-and-twenty when I began. I had nothing—not one farthing had I. At thirty I had a hundred thousand.'

'Oh!'

'At forty I had half a million: at fifty anything you please, with a splendid office and troops of clerks. Nothing was started, no company, or mine, or railway but was brought to me. That is what it totted up to.'

'Yet,' said Tommy, recovering a little, 'at sixty-five or thereabouts?' And he looked around at the plain furniture, meaning that it was all gone.

Mr. Colliber's face darkened for a moment. Yet he reflected. There must be a fine quality of impudence in a young man who could without hesitation fire such a shot.

'At sixty-five,' he replied softly, 'I have nothing, you think, and I have failed. Very good. Never mind how much or how little I

have, let us acknowledge the failure. It was a failure which means a good deal more than you can understand. Why, it turned me out of the City—away from the money—can you understand what that means? All the money flows in one direction, and I was turned away from the place whither it flows.'

He looked more like a hawk than ever. Tommy began to think he had gone too far, and took another glass of port, murmuring that it was a generous wine but had perhaps been kept too long in the wood.

'At sixty,' Mr. Colliber went on, 'I was out of it. Well, that is a great misfortune. I have lost the only thing which makes life tolerable. I can no longer use my powers; they are lost.' Here he was silent again and sat down.

'Remember'—he sprang to his feet again —'that I was for thirty years a rich man. You who want to be rich, what do you know of riches? What do you imagine even of the power of wealth? It is not only that you live

in a great house and have a troop of servants, and can give great dinners—that pleases everybody naturally—but it is more: you are a Power. You are made to feel it wherever you go: in the City where you are watched and envied; every post brings you letters assuring you of your greatness; you are reminded of it by every man you meet at the West-End from a Duke downwards; by the great ladies who run after you and court you for the money you can help them to get by a judicious interview with a broker. Good heavens! sir, I say that I was a Prince for thirty years.'

He paused for a moment, and then went on, speaking in low, measured tones. 'If it were all to do over again, I would do it all again. If I knew at thirty that I was to be a pauper at sixty and have to go into a workhouse, I would take the intermediate years of wealth and power contentedly. If I were your age and the devil were to stand beside me as I stand beside you'—he laid his finger on his companion's shoulder—Tommy jumped and said,

'Oh, horror!' and then took another glass of port, and said there was beeswing—'and were to lay before me a paper offering me thirty years of such wealth and then poverty and hunger till the end, I would sign that paper with a cheerful heart.'

'I would rather,' said Olinthus, 'sign a paper which made me rich until the end of my life.'

'Tut—tut, you can't have everything. You young men forget that a man can only have what he can grab.'

'It must be such a beastly thing,' said Olinthus, 'to give it all up just when one is getting old. Why, at sixty I should like to put my feet up in a chair and look on.'

'So you think now. When you are sixty you will find that your only happiness is to work.'

Then he fell into another fit of musing, and Tommy looked on, wondering why he was invited to hear all this, and what was coming next.

'Not do it again?' Mr. Colliber presently

went on repeating himself, 'not do it again? Why, I wish to Heaven I had the chance. Why, is there anything in the world compared with having money? You get the best of everything, the first of everything; you can buy it all. Do you want respect? You can buy it. Or love? You can buy it. Or friends? You can buy them. Or a title? You can buy it. I bought all but the last, and I would have bought that too, only I could not see how I should get my money's worth out of it. Not do it again? Was it worth doing so much to fail in the end? The more I look at it the more I am satisfied with it. Why, I always knew what the end would be. I felt exactly as if I had made that compact we talked about just now. I knew the smash would come some day. Yet for ten years of such wealth as was mine I would give up all my old age to poverty, even the meanness of such a village as this. For ten years, sir, and I had thirty.'

'I should like to be rich all through,' said Tommy feebly.

'A splendid failure, I dare say. And that is what they remember. A splendid success. That is what I remember. From a clerk's desk to a great house in Palace Gardens; from a miserable shilling City dining-room to all the best clubs in London.'

'If you were so rich, then,' said Olinthus, whose imagination was not easily dazzled, 'why did you throw away your money?'

'I will teach you, if you like to learn, how to win money and how to lose it. Would you like to learn? Do you want to be rich?'

'Of course.' Tommy grew very red. 'Every fellow wants to get rich. But what do you mean by being rich? Is it to run a muck and then fail?'

'What I mean is to grow rich, solidly rich, in a very few years; to grow enormously within a few more; to have the respect and envy of all your contemporaries; to be—such a Power as I was myself. That is what I mean, young man.'

'Oh! I say——' Tommy grew red and white alternately. 'You are joking, you know,

Mr. Colliber. Well—I am not good at practical jokes, and—and—I think——' he half rose to go.

'Shall I teach you,' repeated Mr. Colliber, slowly and coldly, 'to grow rich, really rich, substantially rich—not rich as you and your partisans would call rich, but rolling in gold?'

'You couldn't keep it,' said Tommy, twisting in his chair like a bird uneasy beneath the eyes of the snake. 'You couldn't keep yours, you know.'

'Have you saved any money yet?' asked the Tempter.

'I've put by a hundred or two.'

'A hundred or two! You have been a partner for three years. A hundred or two. In twenty years you may have saved a thousand. You will then be forty-four, we will say. At sixty you may have saved five thousand. Man alive! do you think I came out of my failure with less than twenty thousand? Do you think when a man like me fails he loses all, like a miserable tradesman?'

'Oh!' Tommy gasped. 'But I don't understand. Why should you teach me anything? What have I done? What am I to do for you? You were a great speculator. My uncle would turn me out if I were to begin speculating. I hope you won't be offended, but I couldn't—really I couldn't—invest my little savings in any project whatever—particularly if it is a project of Mr. Massey's.'

Mr. Colliber laughed.

'You are a cautious young man,' he said. 'I am not going to ask you to invest in any projects, or to lose anything, or to risk anything whatever. I am going to teach you.'

'Is it—is it—difficult to learn?'

'It is a new language, and very difficult to learn. Thousands try to learn it; here and there one succeeds. Let me see if you are one of those two or three. If you are, you have a great career before you. If you are not—why—then——' He shrugged his shoulders.

'Then?' asked Tommy.

'Then you will be no worse off than you

are now, and will have gained a little experience of the world.'

'When, Mr. Colliber,' asked Tommy humbly, 'when will the lesson begin?'

'I shall begin,' he replied, 'with an illustration, not a lesson. I shall begin by giving you fifty pounds.'

'Fifty pounds? Give me fifty pounds?'

'That is the way in which I shall begin. You understand English, I suppose. Very good. What is the meaning of these words: I shall—give—you—fifty—pounds? Are you too proud to accept that sum?'

'Fifty pounds?'

'In the City men do not generally give money to each other, do they? Yet I will present you with the sum of fifty pounds.'

There are some things—not things of science—which cannot possibly be explained. For instance, why a bald-headed barber offers to restore your thatch, yet remaineth in his own baldness. It may certainly be for coolness that he goeth bald—yet this climate is already too

cold. Or why an old greybeard, by means of alchemy and its kindred arts, offers to restore your youth, yet remaineth in his age. Or why a physician troubled with plaguy diseases offers to cure your ailments, yet abideth with his own. Or why enthusiastic preachers point the Way of Life and Love, yet continue in bitterness to those who see that Way with other eyes. All these things are remarkable, yet not so remarkable, perhaps, in a village where money is vehemently desired, and the want of it bitterly mourned, as to find a poor man, or one thought to be poor—everybody is poor who has not as much as he desires—offering to make another rich. Why not himself? Olinthus gazed in wonder, asking this question, but not daring to put it into words.

'Why not myself?' asked Mr. Colliber, thought-reading like any American. 'If I wanted money in a small way I could make it for myself. But I could never become again the Power which I was; and without that the money would be of no use to me.'

What he did not explain was that not only was his influence gone, but also his reputation, and that beyond the power of recovery. There are still some things which cannot be forgiven; there are some men whom the world, though their eyes swell out with fatness, will not admit among them.

'Fifty pounds!' Olinthus repeated the words, thinking what a lot he could do with fifty pounds if he were to spend it, and where he would put it if he determined to save it. 'Fifty pounds! And to do nothing for it! Really, Mr. Colliber, I take this very kindly of you. Really, to do nothing for it?'

'You think I want you to forge somebody's name, perhaps?' Mr. Colliber laughed in his hard, metallic way. 'Nothing of the kind. Perhaps I want to amuse myself. Perhaps I want to see the stuff you are made of. Young Massey would not have required fifty pounds to make *him* understand what was meant. But never mind Massey. You shall see by a practical illustration how money can be made with-

out trouble, if one has the knowledge. You shall begin as I began. If you choose to go on as I went on, you can do so. If you prefer sticking to your oil, you can do that.'

He then proceeded to inform his disciple, who as yet comprehended nothing, that the game of speculation may be played on a big scale or a small scale, like whist, écarté, or any other game. It is played by an immense number of people who know nothing of the 'rules,' so to speak, that is, have no special knowledge to guide them; therefore they gamble like blind men; they may win, but the chances are against them, because their adversaries are players who are acquainted with wire-pullers, bears, bulls, and rings, and make the most of their knowledge. So, in a game of whist, a pair of novices may win against a pair of players, but the chances are against them.

'As for me,' said Mr. Colliber, 'I have been out of it for some years, but I still can feel the pulse of the market. The old knowledge by which I controlled the Stock Exchange is gone,

I fear, but I can still put my hand on certainties, and I am going to put you up to one, on a small scale.'

'What is it?' asked Tommy eagerly.

'You are to go to Gedge, in Copthall Lane. He is my old broker. You will give him a letter of introduction. You will tell him to buy 10,000 Russians.'

'Buy 10,000 Russians? What shall I do with them when I get them?' For the moment he just thought that he was to purchase the subjects of the Czar—his bond-servants, not his bonds.

'They are just now $4\frac{3}{8}$. In a fortnight you will call upon him again. You will find they have gone up to $4\frac{7}{8}$. He will pay you the difference, which will be £50. Of course, the stock may be $4\frac{6}{8}$, or it may be 5. In that case, your difference may be forty or sixty.'

'But suppose they go down,' said Olinthus.

'Don't I tell you, man, that they will go up?'

The next day Olinthus paid the visit to the Honourable Gedge, and with great trepidation

delivered his letter of introduction, and made his request for the 10,000 Russians. Instead of being asked to show his bank book, state his income, and give security for so large an order —nominally a million—the order was simply entered, and he was allowed to depart, as if a million was nothing more than a ton of coals or a dozen of sherry. For a fortnight he would be the owner of a million. And then the settlement!

For the next fortnight he watched the money-market article every morning with feverish anxiety. Suppose the shares were to go down! Suppose they were to fall heavily! Where was the money to come from to meet the difference? He lay awake all night thinking of this dreadful possibility. What would his uncle say? And already he saw himself kicked out from his partnership with words of reproach and ignominy. Mr. Colliber had made a big mistake when he failed himself. Why not a small mistake now?

'Don't look anxious, Gallaway,' said his

adviser. Do you think it possible for me to mistake so simple a thing as this?'

'But how do you know?'

The old speculator shrugged his shoulders. How did he know? How could he explain? Ask a flint-instrument collector how he knows an ancient spear-head from one of Flint Jack's manufacture. Ask a coin man how he knows that an old coin is a forgery, one of many committed in Alexandria to cheat collectors of the third century. Ask a man in the picture trade how he knows a copy from an original. Ask a man learned in Scarabæi how he knows the Birmingham specimen from a Nile native. Ask a man who collects old silver how he knows the fictitious from the genuine. Ask a man who reads old inscriptions how he knows the genuine from the false. How did he know? Of course he knew. How could he tell? Of course he could tell. Long practice had given him the instinct. In fact the stock steadily rose. They reached on the day of settlement $4\frac{7}{8}$, and Olinthus had the pleasure of

drawing that fifty pounds, less brokerage commission.

'Well,' said Mr. Colliber, 'I hope you are satisfied.'

'It is, I am sure,' said Tommy, with the sunshine of content beaming from his face, 'it is, I am sure, extremely kind of you, sir, and I cannot thank you enough.'

'This is a beginning, Gallaway. You have now learned how money may be made without labour. If that stock had gone down four-eighths instead of going up you would have lost fifty pounds. You may, therefore, learn how to lose money, as well as gain it, without doing anything for it. A great many people are playing this game, and most of them lose. They lose, you see, because they play without knowing anything about the rules.'

'The rules! There are rules, then?'

'Certainly. But these rules are difficult to learn, and still more difficult to apply. Let us, however, have another illustration, if you please, just to show you how these rules may

be applied by one who knows them. Would you like to make a hundred this time?'

'Oh!' Tommy gasped.

Mr. Colliber gave him fresh directions, which he punctually obeyed. He passed the next fortnight in a tumult of hope and expectation. A hundred pounds! This time, however, he was more confident; and at the close of the fortnight he landed his hundred safely, and paid it to his private account with joy unfeigned. A hundred and fifty made in a month by a stroke of the pen.

'At this rate,' he said to Mr. Colliber, 'what is to prevent my making a hundred every week, if you will give me the straight tip? That is five thousand a year. Oh! it costs you nothing. Don't desert me—yet—Mr. Colliber——'

'Not yet,' replied his adviser, smiling icily; 'I shall not desert you yet.'

He then proceeded to inform his disciple that he had seen him through two successful operations, and was willing to see him through

a third, after which he would have to begin a serious study if he meant business.

'How much would you like to make this time?' asked the great magician, as if it was merely a question of naming the amount.

'Might I say—two hundred?' Olinthus hesitated and blushed at his own boldness.

'Certainly—and fifty,' said Mr. Colliber. 'It is all I shall do for you for the present.'

In another fortnight the young man had cleared that two hundred and fifty. In six weeks he had made four hundred pounds. And he felt as if he had done it by his own sagacity, and as if he possessed within himself the capacity for making ten times, twenty, thirty times that sum.

How small and miserable seemed the oil trade compared with results so splendid! What a future would be his if he could only learn the secrets of the trade, or—better still—if Mr. Colliber would go on telling him what to do! Why, a man with that knowledge was a demi-god. The oil trade! a poor thing at best, and

to end as his uncle was ending, with a square house and a one-horse carriage! Whereas, in the trade of buying and selling of shares and stocks, one might end in Kensington Palace Gardens, with such glories as Mr. Colliber had enjoyed. What a place in which to bestow the beauteous Claire! How splendidly would that goddess become the purple halls and gilded saloons which might be his, if Mr. Colliber continued propitious!

This was the beginning of all the Greatness which followed. Everything must have a beginning, but most things, unhappily, have an appointed end.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS.

It is always interesting to read in the biographies of writers, great and small, how at the outset the candidate for glory is invariably received with a most prodigious quantity of cuffs, *coups de pied*, thwacks, black eyes, snubs, disgraces, disappointments, down knockings, out kickings, rebuffs, rudenesses, broken promises, prejudices, cheats, robberies, rejections, woundings of vanity, pullings down of pride, dampings of ambition, and so forth. The most curious thing is that all these kicks seem in the long run to be good for a man. They teach him, I believe, to feel for other people, and so help him to get a hold of them. And presently his wounds heal up and you would never think, to

see him now so magnificent and triumphant, that he was once a mere down-trodden, squirming worm. Behold him! He leadeth the people by the ear, just as in old days they used to lead their captives by a hook in the nose, or as all-conquering Venus still drags her prisoners by a single hair.

If one could write at length the story of Allen's early struggles, it would form a most instructive chapter in literary history. Yet there is little that is original or striking in the adventures of a young man come to town with a portfolio full of papers; he has no friends; he begins the battle against unbelief, suspicion, distrust, dishonesty, greed, and all the other giants who stand in the way of a young knight-errant in the field of Letters. Perhaps he succeeds; more often he fails. What becomes of those who fail no man knoweth; it is whispered that they become editors of country papers, or that they go to the colonies and pretend to have been on the staff of the *Saturday*, or perhaps they fall back on their friends and

lead for ever afterwards a broken-winged and disappointed life; who knows? The field of Letters is called a Republic; but I do not know why, because in a Republic all the men are equal, whereas in literature they are all unequal. Perhaps the name is taken from some fancied resemblance to a South American Republic, where the President, or Publisher, whatever he is called, is changed once a quarter with a new Pronouncement. The so-called Republic lies in a flat country without any hills, streams, dykes, or eminences; it is circular in shape, and it is bounded on all sides by circles of stone seats rising one above the other to a dizzy height. The citizens of the Republic are always strutting about on the arena trying to attract as much attention as possible from the people in the seats, and hoping to see a great crowd assemble, with prodigious shoutings, directly they begin to play their parts; when they are not playing, they are standing aside and criticising their fellow actors. Some there are whom no one regardeth at all; when they come on

the seats are swiftly emptied; these play for their brethren alone, who look on and jeer; and there are a very few—a happy few—at whose appearance the seats are crammed. Yet all the citizens in this Republic pretend to be of equal strength and give themselves the same airs.

When Allen came to town he brought with him his savings, which, as he had been drawing a substantial salary, considering his age, amounted to no less an amount than seventy-five pounds. He could easily, he thought, live upon this sum until his poems were sold. Of course the poems were most beautifully written out in a legible hand and had received the author's latest corrections. The poems were, besides this seventy-five pounds, all his fortune. Perhaps, when one comes to think of it, any lad who arrives in London with his customary twopence, is richer than he who has nothing but a manuscript, because with twopence you can buy things, whereas with a whole satchelful of poems you can buy nothing—nothing at all. Will a

butcher cut you off a pound of steak, even from the tougher part of the animal, in return for a *ballade*, even a ballad of "Dadoes Sage and Green," printed on æsthetic paper? Twopence, it is true, will not go far in steak, but think of the great lumps of pudding it will buy! A self-made man, indeed, is he who rises in the world and makes his way out of nothing at all but a bundle of poems.

Of course, Allen began in the way common among young poets, that is to say he sent his verses to the publishers. When the first House refused them he felt a little sorry for the House —they were throwing away their chances; when the second sent them back he was hurt; at the third refusal, he was indignant; at the fourth, he felt grieved for the world which was pining for good poetry and being kept out of it; at the fifth, a kind of dismay seized him. Long before they had all refused it seemed as if the sun was darkened and the moon eclipsed. For he thought in his ignorance as if he alone among young poets was treated with such scorn.

Yet he had read history. He lived with the greatest economy and completely alone; he had no friends; it seemed at first as if he never would make any friends. Presently, however, he made certain acquaintances, just as one makes acquaintances in a club, by constantly meeting the same men in the same place. He took his nightly steak at a certain tavern; it was used for the same purpose by a good many men connected with literature, the press, law, and so forth. By sitting at the same table with these men every night, he got to know some of them. In his loneliness and friendlessness it was something to look forward to, some kind of conversation even with a man of whose very name he was ignorant.

The first man who spoke to him was a man older than himself by seven or eight years; a man of nearly thirty, a man with a very wise and thoughtful face, who might be a great philosopher, or a great scholar, or a great master in intellectual athletics, with something of the responsible look of an earnest student. Possibly

he might be a great prig; most very thoughtful-looking persons are; he had dark hair and rather a thin face with marked features. His eyes were dark too and deep-set, and looked more thoughtful even than the nose, a feature which marks the existence of thought almost more than any other. He was a man of middle height; he seemed better 'set up' somehow than most of the men who frequented the place, and he knew none of a certain noisy set who sat together every night drinking whisky and water and telling stories. When he had finished his simple dinner, he used to get up and walk away.

I do not know how Allen first began to notice this man more than the rest; but he became presently aware that, by accident or otherwise, they came to sit at the same table nearly every evening, and one night they spoke to each other about some topic of the evening paper.

The next night they talked again, and Allen delivered himself of his views, which were those

of ingenuous youth, and crude. The other man let him talk but said little. The next night, and the next, they met again and talked more freely. It was not difficult to win Allen's confidence, and in the course of a few evenings he had told most of his story.

'I thought it was so, from the beginning,' said the wise-looking man. 'I knew you came from the country. The fact is, except myself nobody at all has been born in London; everybody comes from the country and works his way up. The London-born men, I suppose, go away into the country, and then their grandchildren come up. This keeps up a healthy circulation and gives everybody a chance.'

Allen laughed.

'And I thought, too, that you were come up with ambitions. Have you tried the publishers yet?'

'All of them.'

'Of course. Poetry?'

Allen blushed.

'I see. Still more of course.'

He said no more that night, but the next he returned to the subject and asked Allen how long he had been in London.

'Six months.'

'And all this time you have been taking your manuscript round to the publishers, I suppose?'

Allen owned that such was the case.

'Have you—if I may ask an impertinent question—have you any friends among literary men?'

Allen confessed that he knew no one connected with literature; in fact, that he had no friends at all in London—or, indeed, anywhere else, except in the place he came from.

His friend produced a pocket-book and out of it a card.

'Will you,' he said, 'if I am not again too impertinent, allow me to be one of your first acquaintances? My name, you see, is Lawrence Ouvry, and I am a barrister by profession, but I do not practise.'

He handed his card to Allen. 'Lawrence

Ouvry,' with his address in the corner, '15, King's Bench Walk.'

'Thank you,' said Allen, greatly pleased. 'My name is Engledew, but I have no card. It is no use having cards when you have no friends.'

'Will you come to my chambers? I will make you some coffee, and we can have a pipe.'

Allen accepted, and followed Mr. Lawrence Ouvry to a second floor in the Temple, furnished comfortably, and littered with books and papers. Ouvry cleared away a pile from an easy-chair, and rolled it to the fire.

'Now, Engledew, sit there and let us talk.' He went on to make preparations for his coffee. 'I don't generally dine at that place,' he said, 'but I have had some work which kept me in my chambers in the evening, and it was convenient. Latterly, I confess, I have been there every night for the sake of talking with you.'

'I am much obliged to you,' said Allen.

'Yes'—he was pouring the water into the coffee-pot, and spoke slowly and deliberately

—'yes, I do think that a man who gets to two-and-twenty, and believes in things as you do, and worships heroes, and takes all his ideas from books, is a man worth talking to.'

He did not explain that this curious and rare creature appeared to him to be also full of thoughts and ideas, and to have a touch at least of genius, and that he was sorry for his friendlessness and for his ignorance of the world. No one, it is true, can help a young writer very much, but he may be helped to help himself.

'It is a mixed lot, the set of men who dine over there,' said Ouvry. 'They are made up of men who hope to get high up the ladder, and men who have got a little way up and there stick. I believe they are all connected, or want to be, with journalism or literature in some shape. And just as in the days of Smollett, all the Scotchmen are physicians and all the Irishmen are barristers; as for the Englishmen, they are of all professions. When men do get really up the ladder, of course they

join a club and dine there. Meantime there is a flavour of Bohemia about the place which pleases new-comers. To be sure Bohemia never had any clubs. You will not be very long among them.'

'Why not?'

'Because you will get beyond them.'

'It does not look like it yet,' said Allen. 'I have been watching them for five or six months. I hear them talking with each other of finding work, and I suppose they get it; but as for me——'

'As for you, their work is not your work.'

'But I must find some work before the money is quite gone.'

'There is so much to do in literature,' said his adviser, 'that the difficulty is chiefly to find out what you can do best, and what will pay you best. The world is continually crying out for new books, for instance: not books which take up half a man's lifetime and advance things; books to be read and tossed aside; light books, tales, novels——'

'I should not like to become a mere novelist or bookmaker,' said Allen grandly.

'Johnson was both,' said Ouvry. 'But a novelist is not a bookmaker; he is an artist. He paints in every novel a whole gallery of portraits and pictures; sometimes his gallery is pleasing and sometimes it is not; sometimes he is at his best, sometimes not. Then there is all the periodical literature to be provided, all the newspapers to be kept going; and there are the special papers—law, medical, religious, scientific papers. There is an infinity of work to be done, and it is continually crying aloud for recruits.'

'I am ready enough to become a recruit,' said Allen.

'But you can't find the man with the ribbons and the shilling. Patience. The recruiting sergeant is always about. You will get that shilling.'

'There is another difficulty,' continued Ouvry. 'One may enlist in the wrong corps, and there is afterwards no end of a bother to get

exchanged. I know a man who now writes excellent articles on church things—vestments, you know, and liturgies—who began by writing burlesques, and is horribly afraid it will come out some day. Find your own line and stick to it.'

'I write verse every day,' said Allen, blushing as usual.

'To be sure. Capital practice. The man who can write verse can write anything. Only verse by itself doesn't pay, even if you can get editors to take it.'

He then began to talk of the depths—literary depths into which men have been known to fall; of degradations in the literary life, into which men have been forced, which should make young men tremble. I suppose he spoke of these things purposely, in order to awaken Allen from the dream of fame and fortune to be gotten by his poems; how once, for instance, there was a young poet who had to write a book for an umbrella-maker on umbrella-making, and got five pounds for it; how

another was fain to construct a story for an enterprising Soapman, with an affecting plot and a happy termination, in which the Soap was worked up and made to take a leading part in the *dénouement*, and how the Soapman published it with the name of the writer outside, and an advertisement of the Soap slipped in between every page; and how another owned to having written, for ten pounds, a book of travels in Borneo—never having been outside his native land; and how that book went through four editions, and he never a penny the richer. And how another man, who lived in the back parlour of a public-house, got ten pounds for a job of collecting texts for a pious every-day book. It took him four weeks to do, with constant confinement to that back parlour, close to the bar, and it brought on delirium tremens. And how another man always owed fifty pounds to a certain firm of publishers, for whom he was continually working it off but never quite succeeded.

Next, this young man who knew so much,

pointed out many ways in which a beginning may be made. The worst way, he said, was to publish a volume of poems, because no one will read poetry. Far better is it to send a descriptive article to a daily paper, or a critical article, or a tale, or an essay, to a magazine.

'If you really want the literary life, Engledew,' he said, 'make your verse of secondary consideration; you may become a Journalist, you may write novels, you may get up a speciality, but you must not think of making poetry pay.'

'And yet,' said Allen, 'I must write verse.'

'No one wants to prevent you. Go on writing verse. But think of other things. As for me I have been among writing people all my life. I am one of a family all born with pens in their hands. My father was an editor and a writer, my mother was a poet, my sister writes three-volume novels. I know all the editors, or all about them; if advice will be any good I will advise. But don't ask me to recommend your work to anybody, because if I

do he will infallibly drop it into the waste-paper basket.'

'And do you write yourself?'

He hesitated a moment.

'I will tell you some day, not to-night, what I do.'

Lawrence Ouvry, a few days later, found himself in a certain drawing-room at a small house in Bayswater. It was five o'clock, and there were two ladies taking tea, one elderly, with white hair and a beautifully wrinkled face and very kindly eyes, the other a tall and beautiful girl of twenty or so.

'I told you, Gertrude,' said Lawrence, addressing the elder lady, 'that I thought I had discovered a genius. Well, I have. He has shown me his poems; he has come up from the country to get fame. He is full of ideas, his verses are full of promise; he is quite ignorant of the world, and he knows nothing except from books.'

'Oh!' cried the elder lady, clasping her hands, 'bring him here, Lawrence.'

'I suppose,' said the girl, as if she was a person of much larger experience, 'that he is a gentleman, Lawrence. I hope he does not drop his aspirates like the poet from Shropshire whom Gertrude invited here one night last year. The best verse in the world could not make that man tolerable.'

'Everybody is a gentleman, nowadays,' said Lawrence. 'This man's father was something in the City, and hanged himself because he lost his money. My new genius told me so, with a blush. Showed that the poet's father had the poetic faculty of imagination. He thought everybody would jeer at him; if he hadn't thought so he would have gone on with brazen front. My man's aspirates are fully formed, I assure you. I expect, however, that he has never been in a drawing-room in his life. He won't be uncouth, but he will be awkward. You must draw him out, Isabel. As for you, Gertrude'—he addressed the elder lady—'you will

take an interest in him, and you will advise him first, and flatter him next, and spoil him afterwards. But you will teach him things he ought to know. Yes, I will bring him to you.'

CHAPTER V.

A NEW WORLD.

EVERYBODY has envied the feelings with which Captain Christopher Columbus first gazed upon the shores of the new world, or those experienced by the other great explorer who first surveyed the Pacific Ocean. Each, we are given to understand, fell into a rapture or ecstasy in considering the boundless opportunities thus throw open for the improvement of humanity and the spread of true religion. The picture is beautiful, especially when read by the light of what afterwards happened. Such, indeed, were the feelings of Olinthus in getting a Pisgah view of that enchanted land where money may be had for the picking up. No doubt, like Columbus, he fell to considering

what an opening the possession of that land would afford for 'doing good.' Only a far off view; with a handful, so to speak, of the sacred yellow soil, so fertile and so beautiful, just enough to make him long for more; just enough to make him discontented with the proceeds of his share in the concern, and to make him lose his respect for his uncle, who thought so much of his business.

Suppose a country—the country of the future—in which everybody was equal, and all had to work in the fields for equal wages. There would be no professions, no learning, no law, no books, and only a few necessary trades, such as hangman, public flogger, custodian of the drunken, maker of clubs, knuckledusters, bludgeons, and so forth, pig slaughterer, brewer of beer, and grinder of grain. The trades would be paid in equal wages with the labourer in the field. After a few generations most people would consider it impossible to live any other kind of life. Presently, a fellow would be born with a brain more irritable than those

of his fellows—he would discover while growing up that farm work is disagreeable, and work at trades burdensome; he would then make a further discovery, namely, that in order to avoid the fardel and fatigue of life, it is a good plan to go round among the poultry yards and the barns, and to help one's self to an egg here, a chicken there, a capon or a duck, a fat goose at Michaelmas, a turkey at Christmas, a ham or a side of pig, a saddle of Welsh mutton, a bottle of cider, a tankard of October, and so on. That man would be the founder of a school, and the first of another long line of philosophers who eat what they have not sowed, drink what they have not brewed, sleep on the softest, and dwell in palaces; all the time with their hands in their pockets. Olinthus was one of that school, that is, he desired above all things to be a disciple. He had learnt that he might, if he knew the way, live such a life. But how to learn that way? And oh! the weary round of the daily toil, and the grinding of a tender and

sensitive nose upon the grindstone, and the slow returns and slender profits, and the discontent of one who has tasted the joys of making money for nothing.

It was poetical, it was pitiful, it was tragic. Consider. Olinthus had made four hundred pounds—a lump sum of four hundred pounds—in six weeks, without doing anything whatever for it at all. It was done by the simple stroke of a pen, even by simple word of mouth. It was not, unhappily, done by his own skill and craft, but by the help of Mr. Colliber. This was generous, noble, liberal, and praiseworthy of Mr. Colliber. But the same patron now refused to do anything more for him. This was disappointing. More—it was mean, pettifogging, contemptible in Mr. Colliber. Respect could no longer be entertained for Mr. Colliber. Who would have thought it of Mr. Colliber? Why—a thing which actually cost him nothing. All he had to do was to give him the straight tip and let him go and buy. Only just to tell him what to buy. If Olinthus possessed this

magical power he would have been too happy to exercise it—when he no longer wanted it for his own benefit—for the benefit of some deserving young man like himself.

Four hundred pounds in six weeks! Why, that was nothing compared with what might be made if one knew just a fortnight ahead. Olinthus wanted but little: just a fortnight in advance of everybody—a modest fourteen days. Anybody else who pleased might take to prophesying the disasters of the future; he would be satisfied to know what would be up and what down in fourteen days; he was quite disinterested; he cared neither for bull nor bear; he wished to exercise no personal influence at all over the future, but merely to know that little thing—what was going to happen in the next fortnight. It was a small thing, indeed, to wish for; and yet with all his wishing he got no nearer to it.

Mean—oh! mean and disappointing in Mr. Colliber.

He went about sadly, hanging his head, in

these days of doubt. Once he met Mr. Colliber, and involuntarily raised his tearful eyes in mute appeal.

'No, Gallaway,' said his adviser, laughing, but not merrily. 'No; it won't do. You would like to go on following instructions, no doubt. But that will not be possible for you. Have you thought over the game?'

'Thought! Oh, Mr. Colliber, I can think of nothing else.'

'Is it a game that you think worth playing?'

'Worth playing? Oh, Mr. Colliber. Oh! Sir. WHAT a truly great man you are!'

He really could not help it. He had been all his life rather inclined to be cheeky—after the fashion of the London gamin—to this fallen financier; he was only one of the band of bankrupts whom he despised. But now, it was not respect, nor was it gratitude, but it was Awe that he felt for a man who possessed such powers. So may one respect the conjurer who pours wine out of an empty bottle, and

turns a pocket-handkerchief into a plum-cake. His words were compelled by admiration of such greatness.

Mr. Colliber smiled coldly.

'You know me now, Gallaway. Not quite one of the ordinary failures, eh? Something unusual and unexpected, eh? A man who could make your fortune if he pleased, eh?'

'If he pleased—oh!' said Olinthus. No prayer could have been more heartfelt or plainer than that simple interjection. Wonderful situation! To stand before a man and feel that if that man pleases he can make you rich. It recalls the good old days when a king was a king indeed, and could cut off a head, or make a man wealthy for life, at a single word. Olinthus knew little about the Caliph Haroun Alraschid, or King Yussûf Ben Eyub—Joseph Jobson—sometimes called Saladin, or any other Eastern potentate; but he did feel at that moment as if he was standing before an Autocrat who had his fate in his hands.

The Autocrat rubbed his hands together and laughed again.

'Is it a lively game, Gallaway? Is it a game you would like to be able to play well? Is it better fun than the oil trade? Do you like to feel as if you could make yourself rich without any trouble?'

'Oh! Mr. Colliber.'

'Youth is the time for wealth. It is no good for an old fogey like me to be rich. One wants to be young and to enjoy. Why, if you were rich, Gallaway, there is no end to the glorious things you could purchase.'

He proceeded to enumerate some of these splendours, and, I regret to say, included many of the things which the wise man called vanity. But Olinthus smacked his lips, and waggled his head, and rolled his eyes, and gasped.

'Gallaway, you would have all these things if you were rich. But you are not and you never will be; you will go on humdrumming at the oil trade, and some day your uncle will die; then you will think yourself rich enough

to marry; you will marry and then you will have a lot of children, and you will find out what poverty means; and you will live here all your days and never know anything at all of the things which wealth can give you. Poor beggar! One is sorry for a man who would enjoy the world so much if he had the means.'

Olinthus groaned.

'If you really think you would like to go on with this game, Gallaway——'

'Yes, sir; yes, I should indeed.'

'Then, Gallaway—then—you had better try to learn it by yourself. See what you can do with it; one can but try, you know. Good morning, Gallaway; good morning, my friend.'

Give up the game? No. Try by himself? Perhaps. Yet it would not do to play that game without knowledge. Olinthus was by no means a fool. He knew very well that without advice the buying or selling of stock would be the merest gambling. Then he thought that he would sit quiet for a while and study the share list. Maybe, by daily examination of the

money-market articles he, too, might arrive at an intuition of the future. To many minds the money-article in the morning paper presents a fearful array of unintelligible figures: to Allen, for instance, it was nothing but an irritating waste of valuable space which might have been much better bestowed on literature. Now if the six columns daily given to the money market were filled with original poetry—his own for example? Most men, except that very small and daily decreasing body who have saved or are saving money, pass by these columns with impatience and get them quickly to the fires, murders, robberies with violence, wife beatings, and chuckings over the Embankment, which make up the real interest of the daily papers. This had been the practice with Olinthus, and it shows how profoundly impressed he was with the possibilities of 'the game' that he should have boldly begun, and resolutely continued for some months, a daily and careful perusal of this intelligence. He had not time to do it at the office, where an unsympathetic chief, like

his native country, expected nothing short of duty; but he could take the paper home with him, read it in the train, and sit over it in the evening, astonishing his sisters by the unwearying eagerness with which he followed the pursuit of this new learning. A City man, he said grandly, must keep himself posted up in City news. He therefore read through the whole of it, beginning at the general information, wading through the letters and the meetings, following the figures and lists, and ending up with the cattle trade. Nothing came amiss to him, because he had an idea that, by industriously continuing to read, he would eventually find out what was meant by the rise and fall of stock, and why it rose and fell. No student of history ever paid so much attention to the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire. So he read, day by day, how there was ease or tightness in the Money Market, how there was an anticipated reduction in the reserve at the Bank, how a fair business was done in Colonial Bonds, how the Home Railway Market opened

firm, and there was a general recovery in Americans but inactivity in Russians, how Egyptian Unified Stock fluctuated all day, how one bank declared a dividend of 15 per cent.—happy bank!—and another of only 7 per cent. Then he read what were the rates for money abroad and at home, and he read how cattle markets were attended, and turnips were firm, but pig-iron in small demand. He read it all and was edified, and then he sighed because the lists which come at the end lay all before him and they had to be read too. He read them conscientiously. Every day he read them.

For three months Olinthus read nothing at all except this one page in the *Times*. Oddly enough, the inspiration which he looked for did not come. If he met Mr. Colliber, that gentleman would look at him with a curious smile which might mean anything, but did not mean giving any more straight tips.

'Well, Gallaway?'

'I am at work, sir. I am studying every day.'

'Good. Then you have not decided to give up the game?'

'Not, certainly, Mr. Colliber, if I can have your kind assistance.' Olinthus smiled anxiously, but met with no responsive smile.

'Fortune, Gallaway,' said Mr. Colliber, 'helps those who know how to help themselves. Fortune is only another name for a quick eye and a bold hand. We shall see if your sight is keen and your hand strong.'

Very fine, indeed; but what one likes best is to use the keen eyes and the bold hands of some one else.

Olinthus returned to his studies. They were really making him thin, these figures. By this time he knew at least something of what they meant; he could connect the price of shares with dividend and nominal value of stock; he had begun even to remember something of the prices, and to connect one day with its predecessor. If the figures had been in Arabic, he would have learned them by this time. But merely to connect to-day with yes-

terday is, if you please, a long step from connecting it with the day which is to follow; and as yet he could not, by any force of reasoning, arrive at a forecast of the next day's prices any more than he could of the next day's weather. Why should things go up and down? Remember that he was a profoundly ignorant young man, and had never had the least training in social and political economy. Of things learned or serious he had never read anything; he did not know such a simple thing as supply and demand; he hardly understood that foreign news influenced stock. All his knowledge of the outer world, in fact, was derived from novels of the third, fifth, tenth-rate kind.

'You are getting on, Gallaway?' asked Mr. Colliber.

'Slowly, sir,' he replied with a sigh; 'very slowly as yet.'

'Perhaps the time has come when a little help will be useful. Come over to me this evening.'

Wild hope! He was going, no doubt, to

give him one more illustration. Olinthus kept that appointment punctually. No cigars were offered him, and no wine was produced.

'We are going to talk business, Gallaway,' said Mr. Colliber. 'Sit there. Take a pen and make notes. So you have been trying to get an insight into the money-market by studying the money-market article. Very well; if you had asked me for help, I could have saved you a great deal of trouble—no; don't say what you were going to say—your only idea of help was another little pot of money. Listen.'

Mr. Colliber proceeded to explain that to study the money-market article with intelligence and profit, many things unexpected by his pupil were necessary. Very few men besides himself, he said, attempted more than one or two subjects. One man, for instance, would take up railways, and even one railway. After they have made themselves acquainted with the whole history of that railway as revealed to shareholders, they must find out the secret strings of that railway; more than that, they

must find out who pull the strings, and why. Again, the judicious operator would keep himself acquainted with the efforts of the bulls and the bears. How to get this knowledge and arrive at these secrets? That must be learned by experience. The money-market article, Mr. Colliber went on to explain, records the past; as regards the future it is dumb.

Olinthus turned pale. How was he to acquire this information and get this intelligence?

'Oh!' he groaned, 'it was cruel to hang out such hopes.'

'Wait a bit,' said Mr. Colliber. 'Perhaps not so cruel as you think. Nevertheless I am glad that you have had this trouble. You have got some good out of it. You know the jargon of the City article. Next you must learn the jargon of the Stock Exchange.'

'What is the good?' asked the despondent youth. 'I wish I had never heard of the thing.'

'Then—shall we stop?'

'No, no,' he gasped; 'tell me more—perhaps——'

'Perhaps, you think, you may get another wrinkle. But no, Gallaway, no, my young friend, not that way.'

Mr. Colliber then proceeded to instruct him in the manners, ways, and terms of the Stock Exchange, in which, he said, Olinthus must without delay proceed to make himself acquainted. The terms seemed familiar to the young man; in fact, he had heard them in the train on the way to and from the City. For the first evening he understood nothing. A confused babble of words poured from Mr. Colliber, and Olinthus went home with his head whirling. Contango, backwardation, option, whether a put or a call, or a put and call, contracts for account, transfers, taking in and giving on, bulling, bearing—what on earth did it all mean? And he was to understand it all.

Next morning Mr. Colliber began all over again, but with less patience. A week later he was repeating his instructions with the stimulus

of certain interjections, words of contumely, shame, and reproach, such as an angry schoolmaster hurls at a boy. It was a terrible time for Olinthus, but he endured all in patience, only he wondered why Mr. Colliber took so much trouble.

The reason was that Mr. Colliber, who had at first conceived the idea of amusing himself by training and teaching a financier such as himself, had discovered that his *protégé* was a fool and could never be taught anything. Then he conceived a second and more excellent scheme, which required that the terms, language, jargon, processes, and outward forms of the Stock Exchange should be familiar to his pupil. And this was the reason why he went on teaching him, though fifty strong words went to force one fact into that unreceptive brain. At last, however, his pupil really did know the language of the Stock Exchange, how things are done, and how he ought to talk about them. And he was not an inch nearer knowing why stocks went up and why they went down. Yet

he thought he must be; and he made a little experiment. He bought Egyptians—they had been steadily going up. Alas! who can foretell the effect of telegrams? They went down—down—down. Poor Olinthus! unfortunate Tommy! By this transaction he lost one hundred and fifty pounds.

'So,' said Mr. Colliber—who told him?—'you have been trying your luck. I thought you would. Now, young man, mark my words. Those who attempt to gamble without capital and knowledge court certain ruin. Do you hear? Certain ruin and bankruptcy. It is not a pleasant thing, though you have heard so much about it. How much have you lost?'

'A—a—hundred and fifty pounds,' said Olinthus, looking horribly guilty.

'What would your uncle say if he were to hear of it?'

Olinthus's knees trembled.

'Now, tell me, Gallaway, do you think you know anything at all about the secrets of the market?'

'Nothing,' he replied bitterly. 'How can I know anything? Who was to teach me except yourself? and you won't. You led me on and taught me what the game is like, and then you throw me over.'

'I am ready to help you still. But this time, on conditions.'

'Any conditions. Oh, Mr. Colliber, any conditions.'

And I really believe that had Mr. Colliber produced a parchment with the usual form of sale and limitation of time, and smell of sulphur, and pen to sign in blood, the young man would have signed that parchment, so eager was he to begin to get rich without trouble or labour of his own. But there was no parchment.

Mr. Colliber took him to his home and there, standing on the hearthrug while his pupil sat humbly at his feet, addressed him in solemn words. He reminded his pupil that he had, at great expense of time and trouble, taught him the various operations of the stock market, and

put him in the way of understanding the whole business of dealing with shares and stock. Olinthus had followed his advice on three separate occasions with success; and he had followed his own advice on one occasion only, and then with disaster. That, although he had spent many months in learning what he had learned, he was still confessedly no more advanced in the real business than when he began. Further he pointed out to him that he was now discontented with the slow business and small returns of the oil trade, and continually tempted to repeat the little transactions by which he had already profited; that he had no capital with which to play; that, if his uncle found out what he was doing, he would infallibly be turned out of the house; that, on the other hand, if Olinthus was willing to trust him, follow his directions implicitly and hold his tongue, he would yet make his fortune.

'But how? how? only tell me how!' cried Olinthus, quivering with anxiety and eagerness.

Mr. Colliber, still speaking in the slow and measured way which best illustrates the possession or the assumption of power, went on to point out that for many reasons his own reappearance in the City was as yet undesirable; that if for nothing else, it would not do for one who had formerly accomplished such magnificent *coups* to dabble in little things; that he was tired of inaction and wished for work again; that he did not intend to work for anybody but himself; that, however, he might find it useful to take a partner who should be put forward as the nominal operator, and appear in the eyes of the world as the actual and sole head of the firm. And, in effect, if he could come to an arrangement with the fortunate Olinthus, that post might be his.

'Mine!' Olinthus gasped, 'mine! you are not joking, Mr. Colliber?'

'Yours. You must understand exactly. I sit behind and pull the strings. You are to have no voice or will in the business at all. You obey. If you disobey, the partnership

ceases; if you talk about me, or let anyone in the world know the secret, I turn you out. If you undertake the very smallest transaction without my knowledge and instruction, you go. You will be, in fact, my private secretary, my silent, confidential clerk, my right hand.'

'I see.'

The position was not dignified. On the other hand, if the profits were large, what mattered the position? And nobody would know.

'Outside,' Mr. Colliber went on, 'the position will be very different. You will take credit for all; you will be looked upon—you —' Olinthus thought there was almost too much contempt in the tone—'you, even—as a great financier! you, who cannot understand anything, and have learned nothing except the jargon. You will rise by my help; you will acquire a great fortune by my help; you will live like a fighting cock by my help; you will make a great name, always by my help. It will be your interest to hold your tongue

about the ghost in the office; you will put on all the 'side' you please—when you are outside the office; and your fortune will go on piling itself up without your doing anything but send your clerks about with my orders and receive your broker for my instructions, and spend the money in whatever ducks and drakes you please.'

'Mr. Colliber,' said Olinthus, with effusion, 'this is indeed a noble offer!'

'I shall take,' said Mr. Colliber, 'seventy-five per cent. of the profits.'

'Oh!' Olinthus's face lengthened, 'seventy-five per cent. of the profits. Seventy—and what about the losses?'

'Fool!' the great financier thundered; 'I said the profits.'

'And—and will the twenty-five per cent. —merely a fourth part—go far to make a fortune?'

'Wait and you shall see. At first I shall arrange so that you may not immediately give up your partnership. But soon—very soon—

it will be necessary to fly at higher game. Is it a bargain, then?'

'It is,' said Olinthus, thinking of his former gains. 'Twenty-five per cent., that would have been a hundred in six weeks. That's eight hundred a year and more.'

'Much more,' said Mr. Colliber.

Then they shook hands, and Mr. Colliber produced a bottle of the famous port, in which they drank together success to the firm. While Olinthus imbibed the precious fluid, his brain on fire with visions of the future, the senior partner drew up certain notes and instructions for him to carry out the very next morning. They were the first transactions of the firm, and the executive partner when he came to carry out those orders was terrified at their magnitude.

He went home that evening, carrying with him, besides the instructions, the best part of a bottle of port. It was early, and his mother and sisters were still sitting up. Olinthus took a chair among them and proceeded, in a voice

thick with emotion, to dilate on the power of wealth, and the mean, grovelling methods of acquiring it which please some people. What had his uncle made? Twenty thousand, perhaps a little more, and he was seventy years of age. As for himself he had much wider views; he had looked about him; he was not satisfied with the old-fashioned way. Look at the money which might be made by a man who knew how to set to work. Why, all the money in the world came to London; it only wanted a steady eye like his own, and a bold hand, such as he himself possessed, to take hold of that money as it passed through London. His mind, in fact, was now made up; he should devote himself seriously to the pursuit of wealth. He intended, and faithfully promised, to make them all rich; then they would leave this confoundedly dull and deserted place, and take a house at the West End, when he would marry Claire, and they would all live together, give great parties, and receive the aristocracy of the country; he should join

several high-class clubs and keep a private hansom with a tiger in buttons; he should have champagne every day; he should keep a racehorse or two; the girls should have silk dresses and necklaces, and a carriage to drive in; he should, of course, play loo, baccarat, and Napoleon, all night long with his friends; he should, if he chose, go behind the scenes at the theatre, and——

'Olinthus,' said his mother severely, 'you had better go to bed.'

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About this time several important things were observed by the residents: one was that young Gallaway spent every evening with Mr. Colliber. What were they about every evening? The next was that the young gentleman, always given to self-importance, had now become phenomenally important, with an air of mysterious reserve infinitely provoking to his sisters. One evening, however, he was observed by these anxious girls, who would, if necessary, have looked through keyholes for

the good of their brother, to be dancing all by himself in a secluded corner of the garden where he thought himself unobserved. Yes, he put down figures in a pocket-book, and he danced, with a countenance which betokened the highest satisfaction. Yet that same evening Mr. Colliber had lost his temper and called his junior partner fool and ass; and Olinthus, instead of rending his chief, meekly sighed and acquiesced, asking for further instructions, and when he got home and found a secluded corner he danced.

'Claire,' said Olinthus, 'nearly a year has passed. Already I am in a position which would astonish you if I could only speak? Have you heard anything from Will yet? But, of course, one can't expect much of a mere clerk. Allen, according to his mother, is starving.'

'I cannot listen to you,' Claire replied coldly, 'until the three years are over.'

Another thing happened next which surprised the residents very much. It was the

disappearance of Mr. Colliber from Monday to Saturday. He went away by an early train on Monday morning and he returned on Saturday evening. He had during the week a quiet lodging in the City itself, where no fewer than forty thousand people do have a quiet lodging. Hither came Olinthus in the day, at one o'clock, and in the evening, for instructions.

Well might the executive partner laugh and dance. The business was going on far more successfully than he had even dreamed of in his wildest moments. They had small losses, but the gains were great.

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Let us anticipate.

One day Mr. Colliber told his partner that he was to look out for an office in a leading street on the ground floor. Olinthus found one. The rent was enormous. His partner told him to take it, to furnish it handsomely, to have his name put up on a great brass plate, and to engage half-a-dozen clerks. He was at the same time to resign his partnership in the oil business.

Olinthus obeyed blindly: his confidence in his partner was complete: he took handsome offices, bought the furniture, and put up the brass plate.

'And now,' said Mr. Colliber, 'you will take chambers in Pall Mall; you will join a club—I can get you into as good a one as you have a right to expect; you will drive in your own cab to the office every day; you will lay yourself out for giving dinners. And mind how you talk. Don't be clever—but of course you can't; be solid; talk of stocks, but don't venture to give an opinion or you will be found out; and if you have tastes for the theatre and things don't talk about them. Keep them dark. Mind; be solid. Not too many rings; one good ring and a heavy gold chain. No glitter, no pretence; give the best wines and the best of plain dinners. And get as many men with money as you can find to dine with you.'

Wonderful phenomenon! In less than two years Olinthus Gallaway was a power in the

City; his transactions were said to be enormous; he was credited with boundless resource, extraordinary knowledge, and remarkable insight. Since the failure of Mr. Colliber there was nothing like it. He underwrote new companies, backed up old ones, strengthened the tottering, undermined the strong, was bull or bear and always right, and seemed to know beforehand the dividend that was going to be declared. Wonderful young man! Said to be under five-and-twenty. So calm and cool in manner too, and impenetrable. A young Napoleon of finance.

You know the story of Sinbad and the old man of the island. How would it have been if the old man had been invisible to the rest of the world, and if Sinbad had gone about pretending to be as free as anybody else, and that the apparent stoop in his shoulders was a mere trick caused by too much study as a boy?

This was exactly Olinthus's position. He sat in a gorgeous office, yet at his side dangled a tube, and when no one was in the office

peremptory orders came to him with uncomplimentary expressions. Also he had every morning, before the office opened, and every evening after the clerks were gone, to meet his partner and take his instructions. Yet he was happy; he had his evenings, and besides, he was not one of those thinskinned folk who are greatly moved by being abused. Why, his uncle had often called him an ass and a fool when the income was ten times less.

CHAPTER VI.

A FIRST STEP.

SHIPWRECKED sailors are always at their hungriest just before a sail heaves in sight. The darkest hour is that before the dawn.

At this moment, when Allen's fortunes were really desperate, and it seemed as if in a very few weeks he would be obliged to go home or else to starve, he had the good luck first to make the acquaintance of Lawrence Ouvry, and secondly, to meet with his first success. And this came to him in a most unexpected manner.

Among the regular *habitués* of the tavern was an old man of seventy or thereabouts, who came every night without fail, including Sundays. New-comers looked at him curi-

ously, and whispered to each other that he had never missed a single night for forty years, save and except in the month of September, when he took his holiday. He always sat in the same place, had the same dinner, and drank a glass of whisky and water with a slice of lemon after his dinner; at half-past eight he rose, put on his hat, and went away. Where he came from and what he was nobody knew. His manner was extremely dignified; his utterances were measured; and he surveyed the room with the air of Dryden in his coffee-house; he read the evening paper continuously, even while he was eating; he seldom talked to anybody, and his bald head and full white whiskers were as much a part of the furniture every evening as the very chairs and tables. Those who sat near him observed that his coat was worn and threadbare, and his cuffs and collar frayed. The table concealed his boots. It was a matter of surprise, therefore, to John the waiter, when this hermit began to converse with a young gentleman newly arrived

at the tavern, and when he invited that young gentleman to sit next to him and put down his paper in order to receive his remarks. In fact, the eager looks and fresh cheeks of the young man attracted the veteran at first, and Allen's modest deference to age pleased him. He was old; he liked respect, which is scarce at such taverns; in short, the young man interested him.

'You have but recently joined us, sir,' he said to Allen, when they had got a little past the stage of the weather.

'It is not very long ago,' Allen replied, 'since I came here first.'

'This is the modern home for wits,' he said. 'Here you meet the journalists, the reporters, the descriptive writers, even the editors of the age.'

'Yet there is not much wit,' said Allen, looking round him.

'Hush! You do not listen. I have sat here a great many years and I have listened. Not much wit, sir? The place echoes with

wit. But to catch it you must listen. They think I am reading the paper,' he whispered. 'No, sir, I am listening. You are privileged, young gentleman, in coming here. When I was a young man we resented the appearance of a new-comer. He was an intruder unless he was a wit.'

'May I ask,' the old man whispered again across the table, 'if you are also in the Profession?'

'You mean the Profession of Letters?' replied Allen. 'I hope to be one of these days.'

'When we say, in this room, the Profession, we mean no other. Other professions are trades. Who would sell pills or parchment? Mere trades. Now we, sir, create; we provide, we invent.'

Surely, thought Allen, this man must be some great author.

'I am trying to find work of some sort,' Allen went on; 'that is, if I can find any that will suit me.'

'Ah!' replied the man of experience, 'I've gone through that myself. I was a good long time dodging about and picking up odd jobs. Courage, young man! Your turn will come. You will, I make no doubt, succeed, in the long run, as well as I myself.'

'Thank you,' said Allen gratefully.

Nor was it till the next day that he remembered frayed cuffs, shiny sleeves, and other signs which are generally understood to betoken poverty. To succeed as well as that illustrious unknown! That meant apparently to dine daily for forty years off beefsteak and beer, to have no friends, to lead the most monotonous and solitary of lives. But perhaps there were compensations. There were, in imagination.

A day or two afterwards the old man began again.

'You write poems, of course? So did I, once. And stories? So did I, once. And plays, tragedies, and the like? So did I, once.

All that is froth and bubbles. You will settle down like me to something solid.'

He stopped then because his steak was brought to him.

Could he be an historian?

'Young men will be young,' the distinguished *littérateur* went on, after he had eaten up that steak. 'And they will have their illusion. One of them is that it is fine to write poetry and fiction. Well, they soon learn better. In the end they find out what is wanted and stick to that.'

Could he be a Quarterly Reviewer?

'Look here, my boy,' the old fellow went on, 'I like your face. I should like to give you a lift if I could. Perhaps you are getting to the end of the tether.'

'I am indeed,' said Allen.

'Very well. I've been to the end of the tether often enough. That's nothing. It only makes a man the more willing to work. Yes, you are not rowdy like that young Irishman over there—though he's a reporter on the

News and draws a handsome screw — and you're not argumentative like the Scotchman, nor supercilious like that young fellow you are so much with. Very well, then. What should you say if. Eh? If I was to say that perhaps I could put you in the way of doing something?'

He nodded mysteriously, and for that night said no more. A day or two afterwards he informed Allen that the thing he had in his mind was really coming off.

'What are you working at now?' he asked. 'Froth and bubbles, I suppose, as usual.'

'As I could not do anything with my verses,' said Allen, 'I am trying to write some essays.'

'Humph! Well, they may come in useful. We shall see. Are you acquainted, young man'—he asked the question with as much solemnity as an Oxford examiner—'with the literature of your native country?'

'I believe so; that is, I have read all the best writers and know them pretty well.'

'And I suppose you don't know any other language?'

'Yes, I know French and German.'

'Do you now? There was a time when I would have given a great deal for a knowledge of French. It was when I had a chance of becoming a dramatist. At the time, I very much regretted my ignorance of that tongue; otherwise I have done very well without it. Well and history now?'

'I believe I know something about history.'

'It is all useful. About manufactures and arts, now?'

Allen laughed. 'I am afraid I know simply nothing of any manufactures or industries.'

'But—but—but that is a pity. In the matter of leather, now?'

'Nothing about leather.'

'A pity,' he repeated. 'Well, it can't be helped. We must fall back on general knowledge and ability, though how we are to get over the want of experience I can't

tell. However, we shall see we shall see.'

Again he closed his lips and said nothing more. But Allen began to feel that something might really be going to happen. He told his friend Ouvry.

'It will not be anything very brilliant,' said Lawrence. 'I know the old fellow by sight. But it may be worth taking. There are so many things in literature that it is impossible for you not to find something to carry on with if you can only get an introduction or an opening.'

The offer came the very next day.

'I have had reason to know,' said the eminent *littérateur*, 'for some time past that an important project was in the wind. Directly I heard of it, from the very outset, I connected that project with you—with you, sir.' He spoke with so much importance that Allen thought some great honour was about to be conferred upon him. Was he the editor, perhaps, of the *Quarterly Review*? Was he

going to ask Allen to contribute to the pages of a new Quarterly? Allen's cheek flushed and his pulse beat faster as he thanked him for his kindly consideration.

'The project,' said his patron, 'is to take the form of a new paper.'

'Oh!' said Allen, breathless.

'A weekly paper.'

'Oh! and you think——'

'I am sure that you will be able to carry it on.'

'Carry on a weekly paper? You mean work on the staff.'

'I mean, carry on the paper. The paper is to be an Organ, sir. You will be editor, and sub-editor, and staff, and all in one. You will be yourself that paper.'

'An Organ?'

'The Organ, in fact, for the leather trade.' He lowered his voice and whispered the words. Allen's heart felt like lead.

'There must be for every Organ a trade editor, who knows the market and can com-

mand confidence. There must also be a literary editor, whose business it is to fill up the paper every week. The proprietors will look after the advertisements.'

'To fill a whole paper?'

'Not to write it, of course; but to make judicious selections, cuttings, stories, jokes, anything to make the paper attractive.'

'I see,' said Allen, feeling very feeble.

'I was glad on the whole that you disclaimed any knowledge of leather. Some men have pretended. You did not. Besides, your ignorance will help you to keep up your position. Take care never to know anything about leather and you won't be put upon. In our profession we must despise trade.'

He then began to enlarge upon the nature of Organs in general; they were, he explained, often very paying properties—look at the advertisements. Every Organ, however, had to be nursed and carefully managed, and though the business part was essential, the literary portion had to be considered with much

delicacy. Experience, he said, showed what people like, and in that respect it is found that trades differ, so that what attracts tallow repels oil; and what pleases those who advance the interests of malt may be quite thrown away upon the partisans of flax. He would, therefore, have to feel his way.

Good heavens! To be the editor of the Organ for leather! Could there be a more ignoble entrance into literature? Could there be a rung on the ladder of literary success closer to the mud?

'And you yourself, sir?' Allen asked.

'I have myself,' said the great man with pride, 'edited an Organ for many years. It is a large and influential organ; it advocates the interests of—but hush! another day. There are listening ears.'

But Allen never did learn what was the great and influential Organ edited by his friend.

'Literature,' the successful man went on, 'is a great and glorious profession. You are

nobody's servant. I go to my office as early as I please and I stay as late. I draw my salary every week and I bring out my paper punctually. I am my own master. Why, I might have been a clerk all my life slaving at a desk.'

That might have been Allen's fate, too. But yet, was it exactly promotion to exchange the service of a City firm for the editorship of a trade Organ?

'Do you,' he asked, 'write much besides your paper?'

'I do not,' replied the editor. 'I have had enough of writing. I have contributed stories and sketches in my day. But it is all froth—froth and bubbles. Anybody can write. Give me the solid work, editorial work—selection with judgment.'

'I hope,' said Allen humbly, 'that I shall learn in time to select with judgment.'

'No doubt you will—in time. But not if you waste yourself in writing. Mind that:

nothing destroys a man's judgment so much as writing. Remember that.'

Not to write! And yet to belong to the Profession!

'As for the pay,' the editor resumed, 'they will offer you, I dare say, thirty shillings a week to begin with. They can't offer less, and perhaps they will spring it to five-and-thirty if they think you will do well.'

'Are you sure they will have me at all?'

'I have recommended you,' said the patron, with decision.

'I am sure,' said Allen, trying to be grateful, 'that I ought to be very much obliged to you.'

'Not at all, Mr. Engledew. I wish you a very successful career, and any advice I can give you I shall be happy to give. John, I will, to-night, take a second glass of Scotch with lemon. At your expense, Mr. Engledew? Well —considering—ahem—thank you—I assure you, Mr. Engledew,' and here something like a tear stood in the old man's eye, 'I assure you

that it is more than twenty years since anyone has invited me to take a glass of Scotch, or of anything else. Time was, when this room was filled every night with the wits of the last generation, and things were said which got into the papers, that glasses of Scotch were freely offered—but never mind. I hope it is not the last glass of whisky I shall drink in your company, young gentleman, or to your prosperity. I wish you luck, sir.'

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The next day, when Claire was on her way home from afternoon school, she was surprised to meet Allen walking quickly along the road.

'Allen!' she held out both her hands.

'Claire, I came to meet you on your way home.'

'You have something to tell me, Allen. Let me look in your face.'

She looked into his eyes. 'It is something not altogether pleasant.'

'Not altogether, Claire, and yet——'

'Your last letter is two months old. You ought to write oftener than that. Will writes by every mail. You ought not to have stayed away so long——'

'I have had nothing but disappointment. Would you have had me come to tell you of every new attempt and every fresh failure?'

'If you tell me, I can bear half of the disappointment for you. Now tell me nothing till we get home. What a cold east wind it is! Let us run. You shall tell me everything over a cup of tea. Are you lonely in London without my father and Will and me, Allen?'

There was not the least touch of coquetry in the question.

'Horribly lonely, Claire.'

They ran side by side along the hard road in the twilight like boy and girl. And something of the old feeling returned to Allen.

'It is like the old time, this, Claire. You remember how we all used to run home from the forest, side by side—you in the middle.'

'Of course I do. But there is no one to run with, now.'

The sight of her fresh bright face by itself seemed to soothe Allen. He had come from town in an irritated condition. The printers, who were going to run the 'Organ,' had seen him; they were kindly folk, but they saw in the applicant for the editorship merely an inferior clerk, whose duty had probably lain in the scissors and paste department. However, they accepted him on the recommendation, and they would give him five-and-thirty shillings a week for the job—hours to suit himself. He could not afford to throw up the thing, but it humiliated him. The pay was a wage: the work was mechanical. Then he had seen his mother, and left her in tears because, after all the waiting and waste of time, all he could show was a small post as Editor—a name which conveyed no thought of grandeur to her—on pay which was less than half of what he had thrown over in the City. He was horribly irritated. Yet at the mere sight of Claire

his nerves were soothed. He remembered that in the old days it had always been so with her. And then they came to the cottage (it was two or three months before the accession to colossal wealth) and were out of the cold east wind in the little room where they had spent so many evenings.

'It is like a dream to be back here,' said Allen, 'or else the last six months have been a long dream.'

'It is a pleasant dream, Allen——'

He had thrown himself upon the rug before the fire, and she stood over him with her calm sweet smile, and the tender look which never left her eyes when they rested upon Allen.

'You are changed a little, Allen,' she said.

'How am I changed?'

'You shall tell me presently how.'

'At least, you are not changed, Claire. I knew that, failure or not, you would be the same.'

'Always the same, Allen,' she replied. 'There are three people in the world at

least who must be always the same to each other.'

'Always,' he echoed.

'While you and Will are fighting your way, I am waiting for your success.'

'Success!' he repeated scornfully.

'Why, of course, Allen. If not to-day, then to-morrow. Do not cease to believe in yourself—and in my father. Do you think he would have taken so much trouble if he had not been perfectly certain that you would succeed?'

Her words fell upon his thirsty soul like dew on the dry land.

'You always cheer me, Claire. What is it? When I am with you I am not anxious or restless. I don't feel as if I ought to be doing something. It is the sound of your voice, or the look of you—and this dear old room. Good Heavens! to think of the evenings we have spent here! And listen! There is the sound of the wind among the trees of the

Forest. Claire, I must come back again and dream.'

'Come sometimes, Allen. It is good to dream a little. If it were not for dreams, you would do nothing.'

'It is like the old times. Play me something, Claire, so that I may feel that the months have gone backward.'

She sat down and played softly.

'It *is* the old time,' he went on. 'I have just come back from the City. Don't you expect Will to-night? I have got some new verses for you. Shall we read Châteaubriand? Shall we have a little *causerie*? Hark! I hear Will's footstep.'

The girl stopped playing and looked round sharply. Then she blushed, and went on, but presently stopped again.

'Old times are gone, Allen, and never will come back again. Now tell me, before my father comes home, exactly what has happened.'

He told his story from the beginning: how

he had experienced nothing but failure and disappointment; how he had been taken up by the queer old fellow at the chop-house; how he presently threw out hints of work which might possibly be offered him, and how Allen had indulged in the pleasing dream that it would be good work, such as would help him onwards; and how the work turned out to be nothing in the world but the editorship of a trade Organ—that is to say, the judicious selection, stealing, cutting out and pasting together of stories, adventures, jokes, and paragraphs to fill the columns which were not occupied by the strictly commercial part of the paper; and how the Organ was to represent and defend the best interests of leather.

When Claire fairly understood that Allen's first step in literature was to edit an Organ of leather she began to laugh; the more she thought of it the more she laughed; in her sentimental way he expected that she would sympathise with him, and be indignant with

fate. But she laughed, and then he began to laugh too. And in this mood Hector found them, and had to be told the whole story over again.

'After all,' said Allen, 'it is something. I was obliged to tell my mother, who recalled the fact that at Brimage and Waring's I was drawing a hundred and fifty, and should have had two hundred this year, without speaking of the China business. I left her in tears. She says she is resigned at last. I wish she wasn't. Resignation is such a hopeless frame of mind. It seems like a breach of the fifth commandment to make your mother resigned.'

'Do they,' asked Claire anxiously, 'do they find the paste?'

'I believe so. It would have shown independence to make it for one's self. And the scissors also will be office property. And oh! Claire, I have so much besides to tell you.'

He had indeed; he had to tell, because he had been ashamed to write the details in his letters, the degradation of his visits to pub-

lishers, and how new poetry was a thing regarded by no man. Then he had to talk about the men he met at his tavern, and how they talked. It was all new to Claire, and all delightful; and, lastly, he had to talk about his friend and adviser-in-chief, Mr. Lawrence Ouvry.

'You would like him, Claire, because he is not like anybody you ever met. He takes everything for granted. We always thought it such a splendid thing to be an artist or a writer. He talks as if anybody could write if he pleased. He knows all the great men, and talks as if they were no greater than the small men.'

'Then I should not like him,' said Claire.

'Yes, I think you would. But he makes you feel as if it were all play-acting and he was taking you behind the scenes. And he tells stories—little stories, you know—about the men we have taught ourselves to venerate. He has been kind to me.'

'For that reason, Allen, I will try to like him,' said Claire.

'Thank you, Claire. He has taught me a great deal. For instance, I have discovered that I know next to nothing of the world.'

'Pardon me,' said Hector, 'you know a great deal of the world. I took care of that. You know, it is true, nothing of society. But that is only a very small part of the world.'

'Yes,' said Claire, 'we know nothing of society. How should we?'

Allen passed on to the next point.

'And then he told me what I did not understand before, how to try a beginning. The poetry must wait, Claire——'

'Oh! Allen.'

'Yes; it must wait for better times. Do not think that I shall give up writing verse; but meantime I must try in a different line. Publishers and editors are always wanting what people will read. I must try to find out what they like best, and write for them.'

'Allen, the people must learn to like whatever you offer them.'

'And there is another thing; no man, he

has taught me, can help a writer beyond the first introduction. For the rest, he must help himself. I feel a little humiliated, Claire; but I think I am the better for all these lessons. See in what a fool's paradise I used to live!'

He was changed by his six or seven months of this solitary London life; his cheeks were thinner and his eyes were sadder—they were full of his disappointments. And to Claire it seemed a sad downcoming of his lofty aims, not that he should edit an Organ, but that he should be prepared to write what people wanted to read instead of giving nothing but his highest and his best. 'My daughter,' said Hector, 'you do not know that it is Necessity, the first Master of Arts, who draws forth their best from those who have anything good to give, as well as their worst from those who have nothing.'

CHAPTER VII.

GERTRUDE HOLT.

'ENGLEDEW,' said Lawrence Ouvry—it was in his Chambers, and the time was midnight—'I want to take you to a house in Bayswater.'

'Who lives in the house?'

'A cousin of mine. Her name is Holt—Gertrude Holt. She wants to make your acquaintance. It is not exactly the trumpet of fame—yet: but she has heard of you.'

'Your own doing, in fact.'

'Very likely. Perhaps you will say that you have not any yearning to go to that house. Wherefore, listen. My cousin is an old lady, and she has been writing all her life. If you ever read contemporary literature—which you don't—you would know her name. She has

written novels, verses, biographies—all kinds of things.'

'I do know her name,' said Allen. 'But I have not read her novels. And yet——'

'Wait a little. She is not much of a cousin, pretty far removed, in fact. But we belong to a common stock and we all, somehow, get our living in the Inky Line. She is a dear old lady, and she likes to be called by her Christian name, which I think is a pretty fancy. There is a piquancy about calling an old lady by her Christian name. It is like making love to your grandmother. When you know her, you shall call her Gertrude, too.'

'Well—but——'

'Wait a while. She lives at Bayswater with another cousin who is much younger. She knows all the literary people, except the baser sort and the younger sort, and she receives on Thursday evenings. So, if you go there with me you will meet the members of the profession you admire so much, and see them without their pens in their hands.'

'I should very much like to go,' said Allen, 'but——'

'Hear me out. Gertrude likes to have clever people about her, especially young clever people. These are more difficult to catch than the olds, because young women want them too. Now a young, with all kinds of romantic possibilities, is much more interesting than an old, who has said all he is going to say. You will find her a charming old lady: she doesn't run after new fashions, but has her standards. She knew Wordsworth, as she will soon tell you. She has an enormous quantity of beliefs, almost as many as you have yourself. For instance, she believes in the greatness, grandeur, and immortality of literature generally; and in the glory of the writing profession; and in the virtues of her fellow-creatures; in the rapid advance of civilisation, in the perfection of the race, and so forth. Otherwise, she is quite sensible; she doesn't believe in painters who can't draw; nor in poets who have got nothing to say; nor in

novelists who've got no story to tell; nor in any beauty except of the old-fashioned kind. And of such is the kingdom of heaven.'

'It is very good of you,' said Allen, 'but——'

'I've given you an excellent character,' Lawrence went on, 'much better than you deserve, and I've promised to bring you. If she likes you she will talk about you and give you the backing up you want to begin with. It is in your own interest that I want you to go.'

'But you have always been preaching that no one can help a writer.'

'No one can in his writing; but people can talk about him when he has begun to write. Don't you see? They can force a man.'

'I suppose so, but——'

'And then, Engledew, it does a man good to be seen about a little and to have ladies interested in him. You must go with me.'

'It seems ridiculous,' said Allen in embarrassment, 'to make objections, but the fact is, I don't like, as we used to say at school.'

'Why don't you like?'

'Well—because—can't you see? I have done nothing yet. I should feel myself a pretender.'

'Why? You don't pretend to anything. You are a simple visitor, that is all. Only we have agreed between us that you are clever and that you are going to get on.'

'And—and—and then,' Allen reddened again, 'I am not even in the position of a gentleman; I am nothing at all but the editor of a Trade Circular.'

Lawrence laughed.

'I knew you were working round to that. My dear fellow, no one will ask how you earn your daily bread. They will talk to you; if you are seen pretty often at my cousin's Thursdays, they will remember you; and when your first book comes out, they will wonder if

it is the same man they have met, and rush to read it and tell all the people they know, outside the literary circle, what a delightful man you are to talk to, and how handsome you are, and what great big eyes you've got. Then the outside people will feel what an honour and a privilege it is to know you, and will become green with envying those who have that privilege.'

There were, in reality, two other reasons why Allen hesitated. He did not advance these reasons, but he felt them. The first thing was—the historian himself blushes at writing down the fact—that he had no dress-clothes. Think of this, he had come to two-and-twenty years of age, and he had not even a dress-coat. Setting aside those who have been wrecked in a desert island in early youth, there are really very few who have never seen any society at all. But this could be said of Allen. He never had. I use the word society in its liberal sense, not in that narrow and idiomatic sense which daily brings

bitterness to so many households. Few, indeed, are they who can be said to belong to Society, with the capital letter. But we may remember that there is social intercourse, if not society, of a humble kind, even among professional men, merchants, authors, and so forth. One hears—so deeply has civilisation permeated—of dances, music, dinners—they even take their food together—among these people. And yet Allen had never once assisted at any rejoicing, assemblage, or festive gathering of his fellow-creatures. Nobody rejoiced in the village. He had never seen dancing except on the stage. He had never been in any other person's house, except the Cottage, which gave him, outside his books, all the culture and breeding he possessed. And now that there came this chance of going into society he hesitated. Somehow Allen, always reading about men and women, their doings, and their attempts and their ambitions, never thought about society at all. He was still a lad of books; still at the age when bookish young

men read everything and learn voraciously. His books were enough for him.

Lawrence's invitation reminded him that there was a world, an active, talking, gregarious world, outside his books: the world he was always reading of: the world of amusement, recreation, and talk: a world of romance and fair ladies. And now there was an opening, and it made him a little nervous. He saw that he must go; yet it was a new thing for him. He knew he should be awkward, yet it would be foolish indeed to refuse.

'You see, Engledew,' said Lawrence carelessly, 'it is just as well to accustom yourself to the talk and ideas of the people with whom you are destined to live. Besides, a man who lives too much by himself loses the manner of society.'

'I've never had any manner to lose,' said Allen, and he understood that the proposal was designed by his friend as a part of his education. He went home that evening with the uneasy feeling which naturally precedes a

plunge into unknown waters. Besides, it was humiliating to realise that he knew nothing, absolutely nothing, of society. How should he have a 'manner'? And then one ought to know what they do and say at these evenings. He had read of French salons, and he thought (being a very ignorant youth indeed) that perhaps at Miss Holt's 'At homes' the men would vie with each other in epigram, repartee, wit, and anecdote, and the ladies would encourage the encounter of wits and smile upon the most successful. As for himself he perceived that he must stand in the background and look on. A new-comer would not be expected to distinguish himself.

'I don't promise you a very brilliant evening,' said Lawrence, 'but perhaps the people are a little less uninteresting than at some houses.'

'Will you tell me who they are? It would be foolish to stand beside a great man and not know it.'

'Their names ought to be chalked on their

backs. If there are any great men I will find them out. Most of them are the little great men. They rally round Gertrude in force.'

Miss Holt lived in one of the few old houses left of the old suburb of Bayswatering. It had been a small country residence. There was a large square hall with two little rooms on either side; and the drawing-room, which had been added on to the original house, was on the first floor and had a special staircase. The house stands behind a brick wall with its back to the road and looks out on a little garden.

They went upstairs and Allen found himself in a drawing-room already pretty full of people, though it was still early; the walls were covered with pictures, those at one end being all portraits; the furniture, even to Allen's inexperienced eye, was old-fashioned, yet not unlovely.

'Wait a moment,' said Lawrence. 'My cousin is exchanging the usual compliments

with one of her old friends. When they have finished I will introduce you.' Allen saw, sitting in an arm-chair by the fireside, a lady with white hair talking with every appearance of vivacity to a man of her own generation, so to speak—that is to say, somewhere well on in the sixties. 'He is an editor,' Lawrence explained; 'he runs an old-fashioned review. He comes here every Thursday, and they have a crack over old times.'

Allen looked with awe upon an editor; a man who was able to accept and refuse manuscript; who could make a man.

Then Lawrence presented him to his hostess, who received him with a pleasant smile.

'I am very glad to see you here, Mr. Engledew,' she said, with a little more emphasis than she would have employed for a young man not reported to be clever. 'My cousin Lawrence promised to bring you if you would come. Young men, nowadays, are not easily persuaded, except for a dance.'

Her hair was abundant and of the creamy white; her grey eyes were clear and bright; her face was covered with innumerable wrinkles and her cheeks worn; yet it was a beautiful face still, and must have been beautiful in every age. She was quite old now, yet her smile was as sweet, and her eyes as kindly, and her voice as musical, as when she was a young girl, and had never written a single word; so sovereign against the bitterness of age and experience is that old-fashioned medicine called the Good Heart. 'We will have some talk presently, Mr. Engledew,' she said. 'Lawrence has told me about your ambition. You have, he says, a generous enthusiasm for literature. To me it is a dreadful thing to see young men taking up literature as a profession with no more feeling or reverence than if they were going into a solicitor's office. Think of Wordsworth talking of his life's work, as if anybody could have done it. If ever there was a profession in which a Vocation was needed——'

She stopped and sighed. 'Do not lose your respect for your work, Mr. Engledew.'

'The least we can do,' said Allen, 'is to believe in the thing we work for.'

'Yes'—the reply pleased her—'without faith, nothing great can be accomplished.'

Then she began to ask him, with a beautiful sympathy in her voice, about his work and if he had anything ready, and if he would let her see some of it—all as if she was quite sure, beforehand, that he was going to do something great. And it made Allen feel as if he was already dressed in silken raiment, and set upon a cream-white ass with a crown upon his head, and conducted through the streets of Bagdad as one whom the Caliph was pleased to honour—a strange and delightful sensation. Yet Gertrude Holt was not flattering him. She had lived all her life among those who attempt and with those who succeed. It was nothing strange to her that this young man should also attempt. And Lawrence said he was clever, and he looked clever.

Then other people came, and Allen had to step aside.

'Come,' said Lawrence, 'there is another cousin I must introduce you to.' He took him to the opposite side of the room, where, beside a piano, stood a young lady, tall and of graceful figure, talking to the great editor. 'Isabel,' said Lawrence, 'let me introduce my friend, Mr. Engledew.'

The girl turned the sunniest of faces to Allen, and bowed with a look which betokened rather more than the usual amount of curiosity and interest in a new visitor. This, then, she thought, was the friendless young man 'found' in a Fleet Street chop-house by Lawrence, just as a child might be found upon a doorstep. This was the young man come up to London, after a spell as a city clerk, with a pocket full of poems and not a single friend; the young man whose enthusiasm her cousin Lawrence found so wonderful; the young man whom they were to receive and to form. Allen observed the look of curiosity and blushed, but

then he blushed on very small provocation. It was a sign of self-consciousness, rawness, inexperience and vanity. Isabel thought at first sight that here was a man who looked like a poet. She knew nearly all of the tribe. There are only a dozen professional poets in all London—and only two of them look the part. For a poet may be grey-headed but he should not be bald; he may be short but never fat; he may wear a *pince-nez* but not spectacles; he should talk well but not with an obvious striving after epigram; he should be sensitive but not carry his vanity openly on his sleeve for the daws to peck at; he should not be restless but should possess his soul in serious tranquillity. *Enfin*—Allen did look like a poet, even more than the two whom Isabel accepted as equal in appearance to the part. A youth with high forehead, large and luminous eyes not hidden by his *pince-nez*, mobile lips, blushing cheeks, and tall slender figure, and the narrow shoulders which seem to belong naturally to men of books. If appearance means

anything, her cousin Lawrence was right, and this was a poet.

If appearance means anything, then, Allen hastily concluded, Miss Isabel Holt must be a very pleasing young lady. The fashion of wearing the hair showed her shapely head, and the fashion of dress showed her shapely figure; her hazel eyes were bright and rather full, and her face was animated and full of expression. I have heard that there are girls who have the most astonishingly sweet faces with no corresponding sweetness of character; but I have never yet met any. There are also said to be girls who have wonderful graces and virtues without any corresponding sweetness of face; but I have not met any. And there are perhaps girls—I do not know, there may be—so unhappy as to be sweet neither in face nor disposition. Isabel Holt's face was not classically beautiful, but a good face of the better kind, full of light and life, sunshine lying in it always, brightness in her clear eyes, kindness in her lips, with soft brown hair, and she was

dressed as some London maidens with good taste and command of money can dress. She did not, for instance, dress so well as Claire; but yet she dressed with better taste than many of her acquaintance.

'We have heard of you, Mr. Engledew,' she said, just like the elder lady, 'and we are very glad you have come to see us. You have not long been in London, have you?'

'Tell him, Isabel,' said Lawrence, 'who are here to-night.'

She began to talk about her guests. One was an art critic of the latest school, and Allen smiled, thinking of the old old phrases dressed up with the new new adjectives. There was a novelist of good repute, and he looked like none of his characters, which surprised Allen; there was another of no repute who wore double glasses and looked intellectual. There was a bright-faced young man who had made some name as a poet, and Allen, listening, thought that his talk, which was continuous and clear, and as full of epigram as a fire of

thorns is full of crackles, was better than his verses, but he didn't say so, because that poet was as sensitive as an Æolian harp; and another poet who had made no name outside the little circle of his own friends, who also bore himself intellectually. There was a big man with spectacles who wrote fairy stories, and a little fat man who wrote the most beautiful love stories; and a retired singer, and a man supposed, like Collé or Tallemant des Réaux, to be writing malicious Memoirs of the Nineteenth Century, and a sharp keen-eyed man from Scotland who was a journalist.

And so on; nobody in the room who had not done something. Most of them were elderly men and women, but there was a sprinkling of girls, so that the room was not without the charm of youth. And Allen observed the singular and affectionate respect paid by everybody to Miss Holt, whom they all addressed by her Christian name. Her chair was a throne round which little groups continually formed, melted away, and formed again.

When Isabel left him Allen retired to a corner and looked on with interest and curiosity. This, then, was society; this was such a gathering of people as he had read of over and over again, but never understood. And no straining or effort in the talk; it was continuous, rippling, and cheerful talk, but he felt that it was as yet impossible for him; they were talking of books and pictures and poetry, but all belonging to the season, and Allen knew nothing about them; nobody, which was remarkable, tried to show how clever he was. There was no epigram and no repartee; they all talked as if they were quite common people and as if it did not matter at all what they said, and as if the man supposed to keep a diary was not among them taking notes. It was pleasant to listen, and delightful to watch from the obscurity of his corner the bright faces of the girls. But no clever things said at all!

'In these latter days,' said Lawrence, when Allen afterwards remarked upon this fact, 'we

keep our cleverness—if we have got any—for our writings. Among literary people it is perhaps dangerous to be clever. There was a clever talker once at the club, and it was wonderful to notice, until he dried up, how the same epigrams appeared in the leading articles of all the journals and reviews. Keep your good things, Engledew, to yourself, and make a note of all the good things that you hear from other people.'

Allen was introduced to two or three people, but they thought him stupid or shy because he knew nothing of the current talk nor could he respond at all to the usual openings. And they wondered who this handsome, retiring youth might be, and what was his line. They asked Gertrude, but she only smiled, and said they might ask her again in six months' time. It was, then, only another Inky Boy. But that with Gertrude was to be expected.

Presently Allen thought he saw an opportunity, and ventured to join a new group forming round Miss Holt. She smiled and

pointed to a place beside her chair where he could stand. She was talking about a certain diary which had just been published.

'We ought not,' she said, 'to allow the weaknesses of our great writers to be published. It is shameful; of course they have weaknesses; they are men, and they grow old and suffer. Why should we proclaim to the world that a man, whose words have moved the whole English-speaking race, was sometimes peevish and ill-natured? My dears,' she was surrounded by the younger people, 'the greatness of a man is in the work of his life, not in his home circle. We cannot, thank heaven, lessen that greatness by finding out that he was not always unselfish. The work remains, and we ought not to expect great men to be always saying remarkable things. I knew Wordsworth very well, but I never heard him say one single remarkable thing. Yet he must always be to me the greatest and grandest figure, because he has moved my heart so deeply and taught me so much.'

'But, Gertrude,' said one of the girls, 'you would destroy all the Memoirs.'

'They are very impertinent things, my dear, and are only written to make great men small, if they can. What I want is that we should keep the great achievements always before one's mind and forget the littleness. Dear me! when one reads how one great writer was too fond of port and another of tobacco, and another of opium, and another was horribly vain, and another found fault with his friends, what does it amount to? It is, to be sure, dreadful to think that after saying the most beautiful things and putting the most beautiful thoughts into our heads, the poor dear poet should lock himself up and drink gin-and-water, but think of the thousands who drink the gin and do not write the poetry.'

'You would have us believe in everybody, dear Gertrude,' said another of the group, 'even if he proved contemptible in daily life.'

'Why, my dear, all the more in that case. Because he has fought against his lower nature

so as to trample it down if only for the time, and to become noble and great in his thoughts. But perhaps some men are two men, one of them great and the other mean. We need care nothing about the second man, but only concern ourselves with the first.'

Allen took no part in the talk, but he listened.

'Mr. Engledew agrees with me,' said Miss Holt, looking up at him. He did, he showed it in his eyes; but this sudden appeal to him confused him, and he could only stammer a few words.

Then a young lady sang a song to Isabel's accompaniment. It was a German song, full of emotion and yearning. Allen thought he would get it for Claire, whose voice was fresher and stronger than this girl's, and yet, he could perceive, not half so well trained. And then they all began to ask Isabel to recite something. She stood up before them all, and joining her hands recited Browning's splendid poem of 'Hervé Riel.' Allen had never before heard a fine poem recited by a girl. It was won-

derful. His pulse beat, and his cheek glowed. Isabel had a strong voice, full and musical; she possessed a fine instinct for acting; she had trained her voice, and cultivated her genius; her gestures, her face, the expression in her eyes, her intonations fitted the words; they did more, they interpreted the words. This is the true power of the actor—to put into the lifeless words the very soul of the poet, the very inspiration itself. When Isabel finished she looked, perhaps by accident, at the strange guest, who stood beside Gertrude's chair with flashing eyes and parted lips. Never before had she felt so strongly her own power. Do not laugh at Allen because he was carried out of himself by a recitation in a drawing-room. Remember that the piece was 'Hervé Riel,' and the artist was—Isabel.

The rest of the evening seemed flat; presently the people began to go away, till there were only left Lawrence and Allen.

'You will come again, Mr. Engledew?' said his hostess. 'I am sure you will like my

Thursdays when you know my friends, and Isabel, and me. But I want to talk to you alone. Will you come in the afternoon and take a cup of tea with us? We are generally alone then, and I have such a great deal to say to you—only the advice of an old woman. But then, you know, old women are always wonderful for wisdom. That is why they used to burn us—jealousy and envy, my dear.'

'To go to that house,' said Lawrence, 'and to talk with that old lady is like going back forty years—yes, exactly forty years. Think of it! Forty years ago all the women—except Harriet Martineau—were religious, and all the unmarried ones were submissive.'

'Are they not religious still?'

'Engledew,' said Lawrence, stopping short, 'you really must not ask such questions. You have spent your whole life, I believe, in a convent among nuns. I shall have to take you to another kind of evening—a Sunday evening with an Advanced set, who will show you how much religion is left for some of them. Let me go on

—they were submissive; and they were meek; they believed tremendously in the bishop, and largely in the curate; they thought the majority of men were virtuous, courageous, disinterested, and that they practised all the rest of the now exploded virtues; they were brought up in the old maxim founded on Oriental custom, that a good woman should not be talked about, but that she should be known only as the Mother of the Gracchi; that a woman must not speak in public, but sit in the assembly with her veil drawn closely, hidden from everybody but her husband; that for a woman to publish can only be excused on the ground of great and singular gifts. Gertrude was brought up in these beliefs, and she holds them still.'

'At all events, they have made her very charming.'

'And Isabel?'

'She also,' said Allen, hesitating, 'if I may say so, is also charming.'

'I think she is,' Lawrence said critically. 'Some day, I suppose, I shall marry Isabel.

She is a pupil of Gertrude's; she can't write, but she can worship, and she can act. She's a quiet girl, but she has her gifts. You will go there again?'

'I shall go,' said Allen with decision, 'as often as I am asked.'

CHAPTER VIII.

AT SHANGHAI.

To the stayer at home the lot of the young man who goes out to the colonies or to foreign parts appears exciting and adventurous. The very name of the Rocky Mountains, or California, or China, or New Zealand, or Australia suggests adventure, peril, and continual calls for courage, coolness, presence of mind, bravery, and endurance. As a matter of fact there are more adventures, more perils, and more excitements in a year of London, to those who use their London aright, than in any average ten years of any average colony. What could be anywhere more romantic than the prospect opening out before Olinthus who stayed where the money is? What more picturesque than the promise

of starvation which greeted Allen? What more dull than the daily life of Will in far Shanghai?

Will wrote to Claire every month; he had little to tell about himself after the first impressions; his letters were like his talk—practical, self-reliant, and strong. Allen consulted her, sought sympathy, and wanted encouragement. Will, on the other hand, went his own way, understanding what he meant to do. He asked no sympathy, but rather offered his own. Allen talked perpetually about himself. Will, of other people—of Claire, of her father—hardly ever of himself. Claire read his letters, as she talked with Allen, with a strange and absorbing interest. She was watching the development of two characters which, as she now saw, were widely different. Both of them had said that they loved her. She knew that some day she would hear that said again; her cheek glowed when she thought of it; but of her own answer she would not think. She loved them both, if not both in the same way—then—but it would be foolish yet to think there was any differ-

ence. At present, at least, they were as her brothers.

Poets and the writers of sweet love tales have all made a great mistake in treating, I think, the emotion and passion called love as if it was exactly the same in the heart of a girl as in the heart of her lover. I am sure that it is not the same. The fierce and passionate longing that tears the masculine bosom is not known to the maid: the young man falls in love—one does not mean the young man who waits until he can afford the luxury of love, and then casts a critical eye around when the people are standing up to sing, but the child of nature—*Homo communis, amator*—because he cannot help it; then he is seized with a great ardour of yearning, quite regardless of his chances of success. Such yearning it was, such ardour, which the exiled Will had to endure in silence, and not even to let a glimpse of it be shown in his letters. But a girl does not so fall in love; she gives her heart to whom she chooses, but she gives it when she pleases.

This, my dears, is a difference indeed. And those who would confute this opinion must be fair ladies experienced in the emotions produced by courting and billing, cooing and wooing, not young maidens who derive their ideas of love from the novels of men, and of women who imitate men; of poets, and of women who imitate poets.

Allen brought her his poems—not love verses; Will sent her presents. So, each in his own way, they showed that she was in their minds. I do not know whether she liked best to have Allen's verses or Will's presents. It was delightful to see Allen's touch grow firmer, his command of language stronger, and his verse shake off by degrees the shackles of imitation. It was pleasant to open the little parcels wrapped up so carefully; to wonder what was inside; to find a packet of tea, fragrant, wonderful, such as cometh not to the English market, but is all reserved for the table of the luxurious Muscovian or the Sybarite of Siberia; the scented boxes in wood cunningly carved and

wrought; dainty useless wonders in ivory; or the roll of delicate web-like silk. Better than the presents were the letters, which brought back to her the strong voice, the brave face, and the courageous bearing of the lad who wanted neither counsel, nor help, nor sympathy. His letters were her own, but she read them aloud to her father, and then sent them to Allen; and she treasured them up carefully with Allen's poems.

'One of the first things,' Will wrote, 'that are unexpected after so many strange things which one has read about is, that the life of the English residents seems in parenthesis. No one seems to be living his own life, but something else—something temporary; as if we were all expecting to go home again in the course of the afternoon or the next day, and therefore it does not much matter what we do just for the few hours which remain; or as if we were convicts doing our time; or as if we were political exiles, who might be recalled at any moment; or as if we were in some way birds

of passage. Many of us, in fact, are, and have lived in all kinds of places. The next thing that is strange to such an untravelled man as myself is the meeting with men who have been all about the world and had all kinds of experiences. Yesterday I dined with a man who knows all the islands in the Pacific, or nearly all. There was with us another man who knew the Andes, and another who had gone all across Siberia. If one could only meet these men at home! "But at home," as one of my newly made friends said, "we should be clerks in the City, or junior partners at best; we should live in a suburb, and never see anybody interesting at all." That is very true, and I am sure it is a splendid thing for a man to come abroad for a while; yet not for too long, or his life will be spoiled. I saw the same man the other day looking at the cemetery. There were tears in his eyes. "I was thinking," he said, "of the poor beggars who die out here." "It is not the being buried in a cemetery in China, but the spending all your days out of England." That

is the point. One may have to spend all one's days here. In our House, however, they have always recalled a man after good service, and provided for him at home. Claire, do you remember—but, of course, you *do*—how we used to go and look at the little old graveyard, so deserted and forgotten, on the road to Abridge? Allen wrote a poem on it, and the old tombs, their epitaphs illegible, and the long-forgotten dead. It is strange, but whenever I see the cemetery here I think of that far-off lonely graveyard.

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'Nobody knows here what I mean when I say that I come from Hainault Forest. No one has ever heard of it. They think it is somewhere in Flanders, and the more learned among us connect me with Edward III. and the Black Prince and Froissart. It seems odd to belong to a place so little known. I have never yet come across anybody here who knows the East End of London at all. When I tell them that Hainault Forest is at the East End they cry,

"Oh, part of Whitechapel!" And I hear that my father, instead of being one of a body of most illustrious bankrupts, is supposed to be something small in the retail way in the Whitechapel Road.

'The people are pleasant. There are a great number of dinners and dances. I have learned to waltz; and there are some pleasant and lively girls to dance and to talk with. Oh, Claire, to think that we never waltzed together! We ought to have taught ourselves; you should have danced with Allen while I whistled a tune for you. We would have pushed the table in the corner to make room. A pretty couple you would have been. And then Allen should have whistled—no, he should have played on his lyre while you and I danced. I should like to have seen Apollo twanging away like anything while the Muses spun round. It was a most unfortunate omission in our otherwise careful education. I am not, you see, pining for home, though I should like, above and beyond all things, to live in England and to be near

you again—if the old times could return, which they never quite do. Otherwise I am perfectly happy here. I have seen a great quantity of most interesting things; many more than ever I looked to see. I am living among a most remarkable people, whose ways are not our ways. I have learned the manners and customs of people who have not been brought up in a village of paupers. Besides dancing, I have learned to ride, to talk without arguing, to smoke cigarettes, and to play whist, which is an immense resource in itself. There are plenty of books and magazines—a great many more than I ever had access to before—to read. As for adventures, there are none as yet; as for work, it is as monotonous here as in England. I dreamed when I came out of doing something considerable in the way of a *coup*, in order to show them at home what a good man of business I am, but the routine is almost as unbroken as at home. I am like a knight who put on all his armour and went out in search of adventures and found none. I might as

well have looked for them in the Chigwell Road.

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'I am looking, tell Allen, for his first production. Tell him he must not hurry it, but keep up his courage, even if he has to wait for recognition. I am sure that whatever he does will be well done and good work, and that he will become great, as he deserves. Do you remember how he used to spout poetry and go mad about Keats? It was a strangely wise thing of your father to send him about among the streets and people of London. What things he learned! I think of him when I go about in the native quarter here and watch the people. They are not in the least like the people among whom we used to walk and whom we used to study; yet they remind me of the East End, somehow. I suppose it is because their lot is so hard and there are so many of them, and they are so obscure. I am obscure myself; but I feel myself possessed of a strong individuality, which these people cannot have, or

else they would cease to be what they are. Among so many millions one is like an ant on an ant-hill. I have never forgotten the things we saw, nor your father's teaching. I have begun to understand what he meant; the history of the world is the history of mankind looking for a king; they have always desired to be taught. They have always wanted a Leader, and they never get one. Or perhaps they have already had the only Leader they are going to get, and they won't heed what he has said. I suppose I have got touched by what your father calls the sense of Humanity. He said that if anyone once seized the idea of Humanity, he would never lose it again as long as he lived. I am always thinking of the things I have seen, and the way wrong could be set right. I do not see that way yet. Probably I never shall. But if I, who am not clever, was so affected, how much more Allen, with his power of expression and his noble heart? Perhaps he will, really, some day become a great Leader. Do you think he

knows at all how much we think of him and hope from him? You must try to let him feel it. He wants encouragement and sympathy. But you always gave him both.

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'It seems to me that one reads a great deal more here than at home. Certainly at home one had not access to all the journals and magazines which one has here. It is astonishing to consider the immense variety of subjects which are every month discussed, and wonderful that we never saw any of their discussion. A good many of the papers, however, are only talk, and amount to nothing. Then I have been reading—all my letters are about myself—books on political economy. They don't, somehow, seem to have much to do with the people. Theories and humanity have yet to be reconciled; besides, the writers think only of markets. Some day there will be a new science of political and social economy, in which supply and demand will be cut out altogether, and be

replaced by—something not at present known to the scientific.

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'And to think, Claire, that you are actually rich! It is like a beautiful dream. Your father will leave off teaching, which he never liked. What will he do now? Will he read a great deal, or will he spend all his time in the garden, or will he constantly invent and say wise things? Allen told me the great and good news, and I have been picturing to myself ever since the change it will make in your lives. As for you, it is delightful to think that you will no longer have to go backwards and forwards to school, and no longer spend your evenings over French exercises. You will be able to buy things now—music and books and everything. Will you leave the cottage? How stupid one is! As if you would not, wherever you go, carry the cottage with you. When I come home I shall find you in a great house, perhaps; but the cottage will be there just the same. Because I cannot believe there will ever

be any change in you or your father, except that he will become wiser every day, and that you will become every day—more and more the Claire of our faith. But, indeed, that you always were.

'Allen ought to be here, if only to see what men can be, if there are too many of them, and if there is no one to look after them. The swarming multitudes, their desperate fight for life, their hopelessness, the absence of religion, morals, knowledge, or ambition; the daily uncertainty of food would move Allen to burning words. As for the poorest English, they know that there is a better life possible. That seems the very first thing;—a glimpse of a possible better life. Sometimes I think that the Chinese are a type of the world of the future, when everything will have been tried, and tried in vain, and there will be a few rich—who *know*, and make themselves happy—and an immense number of poor who are kept at starvation point, because there is neither work, nor food, nor money to go round.'

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In this strain—for the extracts are taken from many letters—Will wrote. He forced himself to say no single word which Claire might not show her father or Allen; if he was allowed to write to her it was on the understanding that there was to be no love message sent across the seas; he was to talk as they always had talked, those three. Claire would like to hear about himself; he would like to write to her; he would not speak or think about his old friend as if he was a rival. And yet he would have liked to write between every line and between every word, 'my love—my dear—my love.' And yet always he remembered that after three years there was to be another question put and another answer received.

In these letters he returned again and again to the things which occupied his mind; not for him, as to Allen, did figures emerge from the crowd, and by their action and speech typify the condition of the poor. He saw only the crowds, a confused, inarticulate, badly

grouped multitude; he would never be a poet for them; but he might yet do something for them. He was grown by this time a rather grave young man, who sometimes said things which struck the ear and irritated people accustomed to think in a groove; read a great deal; was keen and steady in business; led a simple and blameless life; was no recluse or ascetic, yet seemed to know nothing at all about society at home; who enjoyed all the amusements of the place, yet never got talked about, as happens to most, in connection with the name of any young lady; and who came from the East End of London, from some place —perhaps a part of Whitechapel—called the Forest of Hainault.

There is a thing concerning colonial life which is little comprehended. It is that ideas change slowly out there. The things which change ideas are the new discoveries, the new theories, the new men which are continually turning up at home. They are talked about in magazines, so that people abroad may read

them, but that is not the same thing—the cold page does not give one the 'touch' of the time. We who stay at home are borne along, whether we like it or no, by the current; we change our thoughts, our faiths, our standpoint, with the change that goes on around us. What is wild Radicalism one day is mild Liberalism the next. But in the colonies it is not so. One takes out a stock of ideas and comes home again with them practically the same, and it is not till returning home again that one finds how great is the gulf which a few years have made.

Which things are an allegory, and mean that, while Will remained the same, Allen was changing. No one but Claire knew that the Allen who went to London burning for a poetic fame and full of the old boyish, simple enthusiasms, was changed already and would change more day by day, while Will remained unchanged. As for her father's dream concerning Allen, Claire had no kind of belief in it. Leaders of the people, she was certain, are made of sterner stuff.

CHAPTER IX.

A CUP OF TEA.

Allen waited for three days before he presented himself for that cup of tea. He found the ladies in their study—one of two small rooms which opened on each side of the hall. By daylight he saw what a curious little house it was—a little two-storied place, with a room on each side of the door, and, upstairs, a drawing-room built as a kind of annexe. The house stood back from the road, and there was a glass-covered passage. The walls within the two rooms and the hall and the staircase, and the bedrooms as well, if he had inquired into the fact, were covered with books. Gertrude lived always in a library. This afternoon she was sitting in a low, deep, leather chair, a

reading-lamp on a small table beside her, and a book in her lap. The curtains were drawn though it was yet hardly twilight. Isabel was writing letters at a study table fitted with drawers. Two or three flowers were in a vase. There was a small pianoforte in the room, and no other furniture.

'Now you are come, Mr. Engledew,' said Gertrude with a kindly smile, 'we will have a cup of tea.'

She rang the bell, and they had that cup of tea, and talked of things indifferent—how the house was once a small farm-house in the days when Westbourne Park was Westbourne Green, and St. Petersburg Place was Green Lane, and folk came out from London for curds and whey; and how Gertrude bought it cheap because it was haunted, but the dear tender-hearted ghost never once came near her, and so on. And presently she said, 'Isabel, my dear, play something while I talk to Mr. Engledew and ask his confidence. I know,' she added, 'that it is a very great thing to ask.'

'It is a very kind thing to ask it,' said Allen.

'Lawrence thinks very highly of you. Now, it is not as if Lawrence was an imaginative person. He is a hard man of science. He differs in that respect from the rest of his family, who all had imagination. He says you are clever. I like—oh, so very much!—to know young clever men. They are full of possibilities. One can dream all kinds of things about them. And, my dear, I have quantities of experience.'

Allen thanked her again. It was very pleasant to sit within this room and be called clever, and to have so kind a lady taking an interest in one, and Isabel was playing. Now at all times music produced a strange effect upon Allen. When he was angry and disappointed and despondent, the playing of Claire soothed and cheered him. That of Isabel seemed to stimulate him. It filled him with courage. When he came to know it better, it filled him with thoughts.

'When I wish to talk or to think seriously,' said Gertrude, 'Isabel plays to me. Good music brings restfulness—you young men must learn the need of rest—and it brings ideas. More, it seems to give one wisdom. George Eliot understood that so well. My dear, hear a great deal of music—hear it, if you can, every day. It is better, even, for the imagination than the noblest verse, because it gives wings to thought, and sets the fancy free, and opens the doors of the unreal world.'

While the elder lady spoke the girl played on, not mechanically, but with some strange, subtle sympathy, as if she were listening and setting music to the words of the speaker or the thoughts of the listener.

I fear that few would read—if I were to write it down—the homily which this veteran author pronounced for the instruction and warning of the young man before her.

She spoke of the beauty and glory of literature and of its responsibilities; and how a man should not dare to put forth hasty

utterance or give anything to the world but his noblest and his best. This is old-fashioned stuff indeed. And she reminded him that a man's work should be full of confidence, cheerfulness, and laughter, with courage, invention, and hope, while a woman's, necessarily struck in a lower key, should be filled with consolation, sympathy, faith, and resignation. Then she became more old-fashioned still, and bade Allen remember that everyone who writes is a teacher, that he teaches best who knows most, and that there is a special kind of wisdom, very useful to the world at all times, possessed by the man who leads the better life.

Allen listened, sitting opposite to her, without a word. He was strangely moved. The music rippled like the soft murmur of a brook while this gentle preacher admonished him. When Miss Holt finished what she had to say, he bowed his head and kissed her hand, and she saw by the light of the fire that his eyes were humid.

Then she began to ask Allen about himself,

and he presently found himself telling his whole story—how he had come to London ignorantly thinking that in his portfolio he carried fortune and fame; how he speedily became aware that his verses would certainly not bring him fortune because no one would buy them; nor fame because no one would publish them; how, after hawking them round among the publishers, he fell into a kind of despair and began to think that he must return home humbly, like a prodigal, and confess to his mother that he had sinned the sin of presumption, and that he was, indeed, fit for nothing but to be and to remain a clerk in the City, whither he would betake himself once more with saddened heart and gloomy prospects; how at this juncture he had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of her cousin Lawrence, who found out about his ambitions and cheered him and gave him good advice; and how, when his last sovereign was distinctly visible, there came to him literary employment of the humblest kind; and how, in spite of

these discouragements, he kept on working every day at his verses, such as they were.

And all the time the music went on, and helped to draw his story from him.

'Oh,' said Gertrude, 'it is one more of the beautiful stories. There should be an allegory made—I will make it—of a princess, living in a splendid palace on a mountain, offering such rewards as pass understanding to such brave and generous souls who will win their way to her over deep ravines and up steep and dangerous rocks. Tell me more, Mr. Engledew.'

'I have no more to tell. I am still at the bottom of that hill. The rocks are so steep that I cannot even begin to climb. But yet,' he added softly, 'yet I dare to hope.'

'Will you bring me your verses and read them to me?'

Allen shook his head. He had already, he said, read his early verses to Claire, and the result was too wretched.

'Who is Claire?' asked Gertrude.

Isabel played her softest while Allen,

blushing in the firelight, began to explain who was Claire. He told how there were three schoolboys living near a great forest, and one schoolgirl. How they all three were in love with that girl; how the girl's father, who was a French teacher, took two of the boys, taught them first French—perfectly, so that they became as bilingual as any Russian—and then all kinds of things which they read with him in books; and how he sent those two boys, when they grew older, to walk the streets of London and watch men and women and their ways; and how he went with them to picture-galleries and theatres and museums, and taught them the meaning of art; how, when one began timidly to write, the Frenchman gave him instruction in form and style; and how, *enfin*, through this Frenchman and his daughter, the two boys were lifted above the level of their companions and became filled with thoughts and vague ambition.

'It is truly wonderful,' said Gertrude.

Then Allen told how the three boys, arrived

at the age of twenty-one, proposed to Claire, all in the same day, and how they were bidden to wait for three years more.

'And the other boys?' asked Gertrude. 'Does Will, too, write poetry?'

'No, Will is practical. He has gone to China for his firm. He is the best fellow that ever lived,' said Allen, 'and the handsomest. Of course, I have not a chance beside Will.'

'Then he must, indeed, be a good fellow. And the third?'

Allen laughed.

'Olinthus—we always called him Tommy—is a partner in the City, and he does not care much about books. I don't think either Will or I am much afraid of his rivalry. But he will be much better off than either of us.'

'I think,' said Gertrude, 'that this is a most beautiful story. I am in love with your Frenchman and his daughter, who has such a pretty name. And she is sympathetic?'

'She is full of sympathy. I write to her—

so does Will, because we must not take any advantage one over the other. And I tell her everything. I shall tell her of your kindness to me, if I may.'

'Of course you may, if you wish. My dear, I hope your verses are as good as your history. Then, indeed, you shall succeed. We looked for a poet, and we have found a lover as well. We women always take such an interest in a love story. And particularly we poor old women who have had no love story of our own.'

'Everybody loves you,' said Allen simply. Yet he blushed, as usual.

'When I was a girl I suppose I was always splashed with ink, which kept lovers off. Never mind, I have written lots of love stories and heard lots told. I have had my full share of love that way. I am so much obliged to you, Mr. Engledew, for telling me yours. There was a most lovely and beautiful shepherdess, and three swains loved her, and she sent them away to make their fortunes. One

went to Tom Tidler's ground to try and pick up the gold; and one went to the Island of Sweet Fancies, where the brooks are running ink, and the meadows white parchment, and the reeds are quill pens; and one went to a far-off country. And the shepherdess sat down to wait.'

Allen laughed.

'We will not talk about it,' she went on, 'not even among ourselves.' She spoke as if they were already the oldest and most intimate friends. 'Do you think the boys will all love her for three years?'

'Of course they will,' said Allen. 'Why—who could help——'

He stopped, but Gertrude finished his sentence for him—'Help loving her? No one, my dear, I am sure. And now that I know all about you I shall take much more interest in your work.'

'My work! But you forget I have done no work.'

'You have your verses. Now, if you will

not read them to me yourself, will you let Isabel read them to me? She reads very well. And patience; work your hardest. Don't forget to hear music; give your best'—Isabel played a louder, bolder piece—'your best and highest, and you will succeed. You will become one of our teachers; your words will sink into men's hearts. What better, my dear, can a man desire? What better has the world to give?' She gave him her hand again, and while he held it Isabel burst into a triumphal march.

'Happy boy!' said Gertrude. 'You have forty years of work before you. What cannot be done—in forty years?'

'We do not know, dear,' said Isabel thoughtfully, when Allen was gone, 'that he will get on. Are you not making him too confident?'

'My child, I do know, I cannot mistake the symptoms. But we shall see. It is a pretty story, this half-French girl. I hope

she is a good girl and worthy of so much love. And of her three lovers, I wonder which she will take.'

'I suppose,' said Isabel, 'that there cannot be a doubt. If Mr. Engledew succeeds, she *must* take him. Who would hesitate between a mere City man and a poet?'

'My dear,' Gertrude replied, 'all girls would like a man of distinction; but when it comes to money—well, we shall see.'

In the school to which Isabel belonged, distinction was the only thing worth having. Most of their friends had distinguished themselves—more or less; all of them had tried to distinguish themselves. To be sure the number of men and women nowadays who do consider themselves distinguished is surprising.

'I like him very much, Gertrude,' Isabel went on. 'I like his eagerness and his mixture of modesty and confidence. I think he is real. I wonder what she is like—this girl he loves.'

'My dear,' said Gertrude, 'a poet always loves beneath himself. No doubt a commonplace girl whom this poor boy has endowed, in imagination, with all the virtues. He will find out after he has married. Do you think Beatrice was faultless, or even Laura? And think of Prior and his Chloe, and Johnson and his old wife, and——'

'It is a pity,' said Isabel; 'we could have found him a mistress who would have appreciated his soul.'

Both ladies sighed. They would have enjoyed, above all things, the spiritual direction of such a soul in matters of love. And what a mess they would have made of it! It is a part of the curiousness that neither of them reflected that one of the two was young and pretty and with gifts of her own; and that love seemed to both a thing outside themselves.

Allen made haste to select from his verses those which he thought the best. He made them up into a packet and sent them off by

post. He took them from the beautifully written copy which had gone the round of all the publishers, but they were still free from stain or soil or dog's ear, because nobody had taken the trouble to read them. On the next Thursday he expected that Gertrude would make some mention of them, but neither of the ladies said anything about them at all. On the Thursday following he went early, and was, in fact, among the first arrivals. And then he learned, to his great joy and confusion, that a surprise had been arranged for him. The evening was, in fact, to be consecrated, as the French say, to his poems. People were specially invited to hear some of them.

'We have read them all,' Gertrude whispered. 'I will not flatter you; some are very bad, and some are weak, and some are copies; but they have the true ring. You must never give up writing poetry, though you may write other things. Some day perhaps you will get your reward, and write a thing which shall never be forgotten. And

now that I have your confidence and that we are friends, you must call me by my Christian name. All my life I have been called Gertrude by everybody whom I love. Courage, my dear; your verses are sure to please.'

The highest, noblest, purest, most complete, most satisfying, most enduring, and most intellectual joy attainable in this world is certainly to see your own piece on the stage, beautifully acted, beautifully mounted, compelling tears and laughter. Then you may look round and proudly say, with a tear of grateful joy, '*Ipse feci.*' But this is a joy that is vouchsafed to few. Some of us get goosed.

The next highest, noblest, purest, most satisfying, and most intellectual happiness is that derived from hearing your own poems read or recited with feeling and truth of expression. This also happens to few of us, most people selfishly preferring to read and recite their own poems.

But this joy was actually experienced by Allen. The two ladies had invited for the reading all those of their friends most likely to appreciate the reading, together with those who would be likely to talk about it. For to raise public opinion about a new poet is to give him a kind of fame in advance.

They made choice of three pieces which Isabel undertook to recite. This young lady had developed none of the literary gifts which belonged to nearly all her people; she wrote nothing at all, but to make up, she was gifted, as has been already stated, with a natural talent for acting. Her face was capable of almost any expression; she could assume a character and look like it; her voice was full, her figure was good. And, above all, she was not afraid. None of the people among whom she had been brought up were ever afraid; they were ready at all times, and before any audience, to act, to recite, to sing, to speak, to write, to paint,—anything that they could do. There is, in fact, growing up among us, a class

who belong to the public as much as do professional actors, jugglers, circus people, and saltimbanques. With them the question is not if anything is to be attempted, but what is being done.

The first of the three pieces was a quiet poem, a musing in the Forest, inspired by Wordsworth — the communing of the soul with herself. Somebody played a prelude, and Isabel stood up with folded hands and fixed eyes, rapt in meditation. She stood before them all silent for a moment. Then, slowly, calmly, she spoke the first lines. As she spoke them, as she went on with them, Allen's heart fell within him. They were his lines; but the thought, the soul of them seemed put into them, not by him at all, but by the girl who spoke them. Yet she altered in them nothing. There was a little murmur of applause when she finished, but few of the faces among the rows of listeners lit up with any response. So far he had failed, and he felt it. Then the musician played again. Isabel stood up, and

told this time a little love story. It was the merest thread and indication of a story. She filled it up and put life into it by her eyes, her voice, her features. This time the people applauded in earnest, and all their faces were lit up. Love, you see, is a common emotion, but meditation attracts comparatively few. Once more the music played, and then Isabel stood up to declaim the third piece. Allen knew it to be the strongest and best among the manuscripts. Whatever the faults of the composition the situation was strong and tragic. It was so strong that it held the audience from the beginning. And when it was finished, Gertrude, beside whom Allen had been standing, pressed his hand, saying aloud, 'We all thank you;' and Isabel brought him the manuscript and gave it him, with the thanks of the congregation, and all the people shouted; that is to say, they murmured, 'Oh! ah! yes!' and 'Indeed.' And one old lady who was stone deaf and had been brought by mistake, laughed long and loud, and said it was capital indeed,

and that the last lines were quite irresistibly funny, and then all the rest laughed too, and Allen wished that old lady at the bottom of the Red Sea. But it was a great and triumphant success, and it was not until the next morning that Allen remembered that the applause of a drawing-room is not exactly the same thing as the acceptance of a publisher.

There was more playing and singing after this, but this part of the entertainment seemed flat to Allen after the music of his own words. He found an opportunity of thanking Isabel for the beautiful way in which she recited his verses.

'Do you wish,' she asked, 'that Claire had been here?'

Then he was introduced to some of the people, and they paid him compliments; and one man begged to introduce himself, and said that he was the editor of a magazine, and that he should very much like to see a copy of the third piece which had been recited, because he thought that if Allen would

give his consent, he could see his way to using it.

This seemed a delightful and practical outcome of the evening, and Allen very readily and even joyfully hastened to give the required consent, and promised to send a copy of the verses the very next day. Something would, no doubt, have come of this invitation but for an unlucky accident. The editor was a very, very busy man; he edited a magazine, wrote novels, read for a publisher, played whist for three hours every day, insisted on going to bed at ten, and sometimes, though he would rather have stayed at home, went out to dinner. When he heard the verses read he rubbed his hands and nodded his head, because he thought he had caught a New Man, which is a rare fish after which all editors are continually hunting and fishing and asking for; first, because the New Man, if he is unlike all previous New Men, runs up a magazine; and next, because a New Man, although he is so rare a fish and so valuable, is, oddly enough, the cheapest fish in the

market. There are several kinds of New Men, and one kind is not always so valuable as another. For example, a new poet is not so good as a new novelist; but he is something.

Now when the editor who made this proposal received the verses, which was the very next morning, he began by running his eye hastily over them, and he saw that they would do. He then laid them on the table before him and went on with a manuscript novel which he had to read. The novel was offered to the magazine by a young lady; she stated in a very pathetic letter which accompanied it, that she had never tried a novel before—indeed, the reader very soon discovered that she was entirely ignorant of construction, character, or plot. But she was, she said, with her family, in the deepest distress for want of money, and she thought to make a little, as a good many other people do, by writing a story. Therefore she sat down and wrote away as hard as ever she could pelt, thinking that anybody could write a story, and when it was

finished she sent it, with the heart-rending letter already mentioned, in hopes that it would stave off ruin. The editor had the softest of hearts, but the manuscript was dreadful, dreadful rubbish, and he was bound to return it. And so grieved was he at the badness of the girl's story and the misery of her letter, that he quite forgot all about Allen's verses, and rolled them up with the manuscript story, which went back to the young lady. But an execution was already in the house, and she tore up and burned the whole thing in despair, Allen's verses and all. And what became of her I do not exactly know, but I think that the execution was stopped somehow, and that her lover came to her assistance and things were squared. Then she was married, and now she thinks no more about the manuscript novel, being continually occupied with the baby.

Meanwhile Allen went home after that recitation of his poems, with his heart aglow. Yes, they were beautiful. *Could* he have meant

to say all that Isabel put into them? If so—— but if not, then this girl was a greater than he. Allen did not consider that one art inspires another, so that the actor may teach the poet unconsciously things which he knew not were in his verse, and the poet may all unknowingly teach the actor things of which he had never dreamed. But Isabel! The memory of the girl's attitude remained with him; he heard her voice still; he saw her eyes, rapt, inspired, like the eyes of a Muse; for the first time in his life he was completely contented with himself. With this glow of satisfaction was mingled the image of the girl. 'What will you do with him, Gertrude?' asked Lawrence.

'I know what I will do with him,' she replied.

'I am afraid he will never make a journalist,' he said; 'he is too sensitive, and knows absolutely nothing of affairs. Else one might run him for a leader writer. But journalists must be made of sterner stuff.'

'Journalist! nonsense, Lawrence. His work

will be of a far higher kind. The journalist is the scene-painter of literature. Allen's way is so plain before him that nothing can be plainer. He will write something or other, it matters nothing what, to begin with. Then he will write tales; then he will write a three-volume novel; then he will write a play: and then he shall publish his poems, but not till then.'

'You have planned all for him, already.'

The ready tear ran to her eyes.

'Lawrence,' she said, 'the boy has the most sincere soul I have ever met. Not calm, not self-reliant, not strong, not always wise, I should say, but receptive; full of generous thoughts and burning ideas. What can such a man become except a novelist and a poet? To make him a journalist would be like taking a razor to cut bread-and-butter! Happy young man! The noblest career in the world lies open to him. And it is given to me to help him.'

And in the distant village there sat a philosopher with white hair, who said, 'The despair

which follows neglect will fall upon him. Then he will remember his old dreams'—he forgot that they were not Allen's dreams, but his own —'and he will return to them. The poetry he has written will give him command of language; he will then cease to be a poet, he will become an orator. By help of the knowledge which I have taught him, he will have learned things to tell the people which the people of no country have ever heard before.'

CHAPTER X.

A SECOND STEP.

In the spring of that year, being still the first year of the probation, Allen took his next step. This was not a very important step, but it was a distinct step in advance.

Everybody knows that men who labour are divided into those who do as much as they can for the money—a small minority, these are—and those who do as little as they possibly can, so as just not to get out-kicked. This division is very important, because all the prizes are unfairly given to the men of the first division. Surely medals, crosses, titles, pensions, honours, ought to be open to all, and at least a C. B.-ship for a lifetime of perseverance in doing nothing ought to be within the ambition of the laziest.

Just as mathematicians take a simple case first as a test for a theory, so we may illustrate the position for the instruction of economists by a single example.

If you walk along the roads belonging to the parish of Paddington, you will observe among the Roaders—that dignified and useful body who sweep the roads for the omnibus horses—the greatest difference in zeal. Some are careless and slothful in their sweeping; some handle the broom as if they were ashamed of it; some as if they disliked it; some as if they were born to better things, and had once stood behind counters. Some, again, are for ever stopping to exchange ideas; some shed tears at sight of a public-house; and some love to meditate awhile, leaning on the broom. Among them is a man, small of stature—in fact he is only three feet two or thereabouts, and his legs are curly—but he has a great and determined head, and he carries the longest broom of any. This man is the Prince of Roaders. For eighteenpence a day he throws

the whole strength, heart, and soul of him into sweeping; he sweeps with zeal; he sweeps continually, he sweeps with conscience and feeling. The work is full of responsibility for him, he magnifies his office; the eye of the policeman is upon him, he is an example to his fellows; he loveth not the narrow streets where he feels that he is losing time; he longs to be back to the breadth and generous depth of the mud in the Edgware Road; on Sundays he saunters on the pavement between services and joyously thinks of the morrow.

I have been led to think of this great man while considering the labours of Allen upon his despised Organ.

Being told that he was to provide, somehow, an attractive paper every week, he set to work with great zeal and produced a sheet which ought to have amazed and edified every person connected with leather, from the Master and Warden and Clerk of the Leather Sellers' Company to the 'translators' of Seven Dials. He cut out stories from American papers, he also

found very good verses in the same rich mines ; and from the stores of English literature he cut and copied all kinds of interesting paragraphs. Finally, he began to put in things of his own, little *études*, essays, and sketches. Nobody, really, ought to be allowed to write essays before he is sixty. The best I know, also the shortest, are those pithy ones compiled by King Solomon when about that age.

Allen found, after a time, that he had one critic and one admirer. There was an old grey-beard in the office, a foreman ; the Organ was in his department ; from the first he read it critically. In the earliest number he recognised a master-hand. He looked to see a falling off in the second, the third, and the fourth numbers. On the contrary, there was improvement. This foreman had experience of Organs, he knew that as a rule they are badly edited ; but this young gentleman was a conscientious young gentleman ; he spent long hours in his office ; he used the scissors with discrimination and the paste with judgment ; he ' made up ' with an

artistic eye; he did not pitchfork things into the paper; he did not consider that anything would do for the subscribers; he even seemed —but this might be fancy—to have a feeling for leather. Other gentlemen connected with the press, again, sometimes came to their work in the morning with a little thickness in speech, and fell asleep in the afternoon. This young man not only was always sober, but never wanted to drink anything. And, when these original articles began the old man's admiration became irrepressible. He must needs speak if only to show his own taste and appreciation of style.

'Young gentleman,' he said, 'your tales' —alluding to the paste and scissors department —'are Shakespearian, quite Shakespearian. It is a marvel to all the world'—he spoke as if the Organ was thus largely disseminated— 'where you find them and how you keep it up. As for the poetry'—which also belonged to the same department—'I dessay to them who likes verses that it is pleasing. But what charms

me, Mr. Engledew, is your own articles. There isn't an Organ in all London which gets such writing. But we shall lose you, that's where the shoe pinches. It isn't two quid a week that will keep a young gentleman of your powers.'

Praise, even from a foreman, is pleasing to a young writer.

'On the magazines, Mr. Engledew,' the old man went on, 'they pay, I believe, a pound a page. It would be nothing to you to dash off twenty pages a day. There is a hundred and twenty pounds a week. Think of that!'

Stimulated by this encouragement, Allen consulted Lawrence Ouvry about attacking the magazines a second time. They held a solemn counsel or Parliament upon the subject.

'I've expected you a long time,' said Lawrence. 'Now let us talk. As for journalism, Gertrude won't hear of it. And I think it would be a mistake. They want harder men. You would only become a prig, and belittle your subjects and yourself. Let us consider. As for this little paper'—it was a short paper

on a French poet—'it strikes me that it is pretty good. Let me cut it out. Whatever you are writing,' he went on meditatively, 'you must consider your editor. One editor only cares for politics; another, only for burning questions; another, for practical things; another, for art; and another, for literature.' He proceeded to tick off the magazines one after the other, and to give the character of each important editor. 'As for verses, none of them want verses; most of them hate verses, to begin with; one man funks them, sends them round among his friends for advice, and goes by the weight of opinion. Most likely, if you were to go with a string of sonnets as good as Petrarch's, they would all be returned to you, unless you had made your name as a poet first.'

'Well,' Allen sighed—would his verses never get a chance? 'What about an essay?'

'Humph!' The wise young man shook his suggestive head. 'You see it is almost as easy to write a bad essay as a bad poem, and, worse

still, all the editors know when an essay is bad. Can't you strike upon something novel?'

'You *shall* tell me,' said Allen, 'how it is that you are so learned in all the secrets of literature.'

Lawrence laughed.

'Did I not tell you that my father was an editor, and my mother a poet, and that one of my sisters writes three-volume novels, and that I wish she wouldn't? and that Gertrude Holt is my cousin? and that all my relations go about with inky fingers?'

'All that does not account for what you know. How did you learn the names of all the editors and their characteristics, and what the magazines circulate, and what they pay, and all about it?'

'I hear it partly at the club, and partly ——hush!'

He rose, and with an air of the greatest mystery closed the outer oak.

'Tell me,' he whispered, 'what my people have told you about me.'

'They say that you have taken a line different from that of the rest; you are a man of science; a cold mathematician.'

'It is the traditional belief,' said Lawrence gloomily. 'I was told at the beginning that, as everybody else in my family went in for literature, and it was becoming monotonous, I had better take up something else. They shoved me out. I wasn't allowed to be a rival to the rest of the family.'

'Well?'

'They sent me to Cambridge, and told me to read mathematics. Then they sat down and went on with their verses and their stories. I had no great objection, because the science of mathematics, if you happen to like it, is a pleasing pursuit, up to a certain point. After that it becomes tedious. I even took honours, and they made me a Fellow. I am now, in addition, a barrister. But I know no law, and I have no practice, and I do no mathematics. And, in point of fact, though noo ne knows anything about it, I am a humbug. I

have gone back to the family profession. I—in point of fact—I write.'

This young man was long past blushing, but there was a certain pleasing confusion in his mind when he made this confession.

'What do you write?' asked Allen eagerly. 'I am so glad. Now I understand your sympathy with me. Tell me what you write.'

'I write frivolities. They are sometimes comediettas in one act, which people will call stories; sometimes they are *vers de société*; sometimes they are *ballades* on a blue mug or a milk-jug, you know; sometimes they are articles of the kind called light—in fact, I am one of the frothiest and most frivolous of writers; my cousin Isabel is fond of my productions, and reads them, and never even suspects——'

'That is because you look so wise.'

'So did Lord Thurlow. Nature ought to pay some regard to the fitness of things. But it's rather disappointing when you have done rather a smart thing to find that nobody thinks you capable of doing it.'

'But why not tell them?'

'Picture to yourself Gertrude's sorrow and Isabel's disgust. I am not even a serious writer. As for you, you will be as serious as a sexton, unless you take care. They will have to give up their cold and critical man of science, too. No, Engledew, do not ask me to tell Isabel—yet.'

'I understand,' said Allen. And then he was seized with one of those fits of uncontrollable laughter which only come to the young. So had he laughed at thinking of Tommy's countenance at the famous supper.

'The new departure of the family greatness!' said Lawrence. 'That will have to go, too. Dreadful! How shall I tell them?'

'But why not?'

Lawrence shook his head.

'You don't know——Well—about yourself now. When first I made your acquaintance, in a happy hour, I thought you were the most ignorant young man ever raised. When I got to know you better, and found out what your

ambitions were, and guessed your powers, I was in rather a fix. Because, you see, I wanted to help you, and I could help you—that is to say, I could take anything to an editor and ask him to consider it. But you were so raw that I thought it best to let you learn a little experience. It wouldn't hurt you to have your verses sent back, and to find things out for yourself. So I left you alone. You have been learning all this time a quantity of most valuable things.'

'I begin to see,' said Allen. 'Yes; I must have seemed extraordinarily raw.'

'After six months of Gertrude and her *salon*, and your own observations and the experience of that most blessed of all Organs, you ought to write ten times as well. And, of course, you can. Remains, however, to find out a promising line.'

He then went on to point out that, in writing for a magazine, the safest and best method is to begin with a subject about which people are perfectly ignorant, and which is at

the same time attractive. Great names, he explained, have been made by going to fundamental things, such as the questions, whether it is not better never to have been born; whether it is right to honour your parents; whether religion is worth having; whether the fittest rulers of a country are not the most ignorant classes in that country, and so forth. Also reputations have been made by writing in affected and uncouth language—of course only very superior persons can use jargon. Could not, however, some subject be found which was a little out of the way and yet attractive? Next to getting a good subject, he explained that it is highly important that every paper should be signed; people soon get accustomed to a new name. By degrees a *clientèle* is established, and a man's things are looked for. At last he is in a position to ask admission into any journal, magazine, or review that he pleases.

All this seemed sound advice.

'I am glad you think so,' said Lawrence. 'Now for a subject. Do you know languages?'

'I know French and German.'

'Why,' cried Lawrence, 'we are both fools together. Here,' he pointed to the articles in the Organ, 'is an endless mine of subjects. Go, find a picturesque French poet—they are all picturesque except Boileau—and dress him up and translate him, and the thing is done. I charge myself with the rest.'

Allen found such a poet and worked upon him. He translated some of his poems with great care; then he constructed a portrait of him, so that he became, to all who read, a living man. He worked at it assiduously; he grudged no time upon his paper. At last he brought it to his friend—finished.

Lawrence tossed it carelessly on his table, and began cruelly to talk about something else. Why, Allen wanted him to read the paper and discuss the subject.

Oh! happy day which brought the young writer the first proofs of his first accepted paper.

It is a solemn moment. I know none

more solemn—when one gets his first proofs. The young man—of course I do not mean the young man who has been brought up among proofs, and whose family all belong to the profession, like Lawrence, but the young man from the country—feels a choking at the throat and a beating of the heart; he is ashamed of himself. I do not know why, but he is; he feels sure the work will turn out badly; he has been a fool, he thinks, to believe that he can write. Then he falls to work nervously and eagerly. He reads his proof first critically to see if the sentences are balanced; then he reads it coldly, as if he were a reader for the press, and only cared for the right spelling, the proper stops, or the wrong founts; then he reads it a third time, and begins to alter adjectives, displace adverbs, and change semicolons into colons—printers are all in a conspiracy to abolish the old-fashioned stop called the colon—to put capital letters where they ought to be—printers are also leagued together to abolish capital letters.

Next he reads it a fourth time in order to put *then* for *thus*, *thus* for *then*; *then* for *there*, and *there* for *then*; *these* for *those*, and *those* for *these*, with other such corrections of errors which the printers make out of pure gaiety and for the fun and joke of it. Then he reads it suspiciously, because, perhaps, some date is wrong, or there is some small error of fact. Lastly, with infinite pains, he writes up the proof a little here and there. At last, reluctantly, he lets it go, but asks for a revise; when the revise comes he makes more corrections and asks for another.

The next number of the magazine appeared, but without Allen's paper! This was a dreadful disappointment. Four weary weeks passed, and then—ah! then—his paper appeared. He had made his appearance in public at last. He sent one copy to Claire, and another to his mother, and another to Gertrude; and when, next day, he went to Bayswater for afternoon tea, Isabel was reading his article aloud,

and Gertrude greeted him with appreciative praise.

'My dear,' she said, taking his hand, 'you will work in other lines and do more original work. But this is good work. The translations are admirable, and your study of the poet is life-like. As a first step it is all that is to be wished.'

'Thank you, Gertrude. And you, Isabel?' For all writers—even the hardened, review-battered old writers—are insatiate of praise. It makes them write better. 'Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood.' 'And you, Isabel?'

'It is truly delightful, Allen. What does Claire think of it?'

'Claire has not written yet.' Perhaps he thought Claire might have written by return post.

And then they talked over the article, discussing it from every point of view, until Allen almost believed that it was a matter of

national importance. So that it was with a thrill of indignation that he read in a weekly paper the following abominable notice: 'The two serial novels in —— maintain their interest. The current number also contains the usual allowance of essays and biographical papers, pretty well up to the general standard of this popular magazine.' 'Pretty well up to the general standard!' He was greatly dejected to think that his paper could only be considered as 'pretty well' up to the general standard. And then, on looking through the paper again, he discovered—a thing which disheartened and disgusted him—that he had passed over three most glaring errors—viz., two semicolons which ought to have been colons, and a *thus* for a *then*. Horrible carelessness! Would the editor find it out?

CHAPTER XI.

A DAZZLING SUCCESS.

THERE lies, not far from Capel Court, a mysterious world, the world of Finance. It is a world inhabited by a race resembling men, who spend their lives in whispering, chattering in corners, winking at each other, making signs, buying nothing at all without money, and making great profit thereat; selling for nothing what they have not got and going bankrupt over the transaction; building up great edifices for other people out of rotten eggs; knocking these down again and with the profits buying marble palaces; stealing the slender fortunes of widows, orphans, clergymen, and all who are poor and defenceless; promising what they will never perform,

stating what they know to be false, and prophesying things which will never happen. Their language among themselves is barbarous and impossible to understand. Outside, however, they can talk English. Now among this world it presently began to be whispered that there had arisen an operator of extraordinary sagacity and boldness.

The first step in the direction of greatness is to attract attention; the next is to become the subject of conversation; the third to have stories, mostly false, told about you; after this, if you keep it up, you become the object of everybody's envy and hatred. This is true greatness, at which we should all aim.

Olinthus Gallaway advanced quickly from the first to the second step. He got talked about; his transactions were magnified and his successes exaggerated, and his origin and first beginnings were put back, so to speak, in order to bring his sudden rise into better relief—he was reported, for instance, to have been an errand-boy to begin with; and everybody

asked how and by what methods he had acquired the greater natural insight with which he began to be credited.

'As he has gone up,' said his uncle, that steady old man of business, who did not believe in sudden success, 'as he has gone up, so he will come down—a rocket, sir.'

Young men in the City, however, admire rockets. The rocket not only goes up very high, but it is a most splendid and beautiful thing, leaving a bright track behind it, and when it bursts it scatters about showers of golden rain. True it then comes down, an obscure and useless stick with an empty case tied on to it. But, among financial rockets, there has been found out a way of coming down soft.

Olinthus, for his own part, found his greatness a thing eminently enjoyable. There were drawbacks—most serious drawbacks to be sure: the man who gave him his daily orders was a horribly irritable and peevish old man: his tongue was as sharp as a knife; he was

overbearing, harsh, exacting, and insisted on his orders being carried out to the letter. He frequently informed his partner that he was far more stupid than could have been believed possible, even in fallen humanity. If he found, as often happened, some difficulty in getting his plans understood, he would apply without stint or moderation the stimulus of the strongest and most abusive language. If he had been a younger man I believe he would have stimulated and encouraged his partner's somewhat sluggish intellect by the exhibition of Father Stick, that eminent persuader. It was hard, indeed, for the young man to bear these things; but he reflected that the walls were thick, and that no one knew or suspected. And then, he had the opportunity almost every day of observing how obedience led to golden results, even though three-fourths, which was shameful, went to the man who wanted the money least. As for the false position which he occupied, that gave him no shame at all. When—outside the office—he was congratu-

lated and flattered for his extraordinary acumen he only smoothed his chin, smiled, and looked as wise as Nature would allow. Sometimes it certainly did occur to him that if his partner should happen to fall ill, or die, or should take it into his head to retire from the firm, or should turn him out and carry on the business openly, it might be awkward for him; because in that case he would have to abandon the business of speculation altogether, and if his little pile was not already made it might be very disagreeable for him. On the other hand, if the old man should only go on for another year or two, he would make that little pile, and a very comfortable little pile it would be. At first, he used to wonder what were the secret sources of information possessed by his wonderful partner; but as he never found out anything nor advanced one single step towards understanding the business in which he was supposed outside to be so great a proficient, he ceased to trouble his mind about it and endeavoured only to per-

form his own part as executive partner so as to keep Mr. Colliber in good temper and prevent his thinking of a retirement or a change in partners. For oh! how the men he knew, the young City men, would jump at such a chance! Who would not endure, provided it was kept secret, the contumely and ill-treatment of such a ghost, such a substantial ghost, who was building up for him such a fortune, and bestowing upon him so great a reputation? Why seek for reason? He was ordered, blindly and without asking questions, to buy with the right hand, and with the left hand to sell, the same stock at the same time; he was to bull or to bear, or both—why? The thing was inexplicable. The result was without any doubt: if he continued a mere machine; if the 'executive partner' was only a puppet, whose strings were pulled by a man in a back office, and whose limbs were worked without his knowing why; and a mouthpiece speaking words which he did not understand, what mattered it provided the money kept rolling up?

The orders which Mr. Colliber gave him extended even to the details of his private life. Above all, he was to practise, diligently, the art of silence.

'You will not say a word, or drop a hint,' said Colliber, 'not the least hint of what you have done or are doing. As for what you are going to do,' he sneered, showing his teeth in a most disagreeable manner, 'you can't drop a hint, because you don't know. Do you hear me? Not a word must be said about my operations. If you talk, I shall find out; and then—you know what.'

'I am perfectly secret, sir,' said Olinthus trembling. 'I hope you can at least trust that I——'

'They'll get round you,' interrupted the senior partner. 'The women will try to get round you. You will be asked to dinner; they will give you dry champagne and put flowers on the table and tell you that you are the wisest of men. I know their tricks and their trumperies. They used to try it on with

me. They will say, "Hush!" when you are going to speak, and look at you across the table and make great eyes at you. I know 'em—I know their tricks and trumperies. After dinner they will make you sit beside them and then more great eyes, till your silly brain will reel; very likely they will say that you are as handsome as you are clever.' Olinthus blushed because there, indeed, was struck a weak spot. He certainly thought he was remarkable for being at once so handsome and so clever. 'Yes; they'll say anything to get round you'—Mr. Colliber really could put things in the most disagreeable way—'and then they'll ask in a whisper what they should buy. They will say that so great a financier can afford to be generous. And your knees will knock together; but still you—mustn't—tell them. Do you understand that? Your partnership depends upon your silence.'

'Yes,' said Olinthus, 'oh yes, I quite understand.'

'You have got to be adamant. Do you hear?'

'Certainly, sir; certainly, adamant.'

'You can't look wise if you try ever so hard,' his pleasant partner went on, 'but you might look knowing perhaps. Endeavour to look knowing when they pump you; shut up tight: say nothing: when they sniggle up and make eyes, look the other way; when they talk about the great financier, change the subject; say you have left the City behind. That's an easy thing to say. You can get out of it that way, even though they leave off asking you to dinner. And, besides, you can do that without letting one find out what a stupendous ass you are.'

'Yes, sir,' said Olinthus, without betraying the least resentment at this arbitrary treatment. 'At the same time, sir, I would observe that my friends, when they ask me to dinner, do so for the pleasure of my——'

'If I only had caught young Massey in time, he would have been of real use. I

could have taught him, while—as for you—if it wasn't that I wanted a dummy—well!'

And this was only one of many disagreeable conversations conducted in this tone.

The junior partner retired, and drove home in his nice cab to his new chambers. They were beautiful chambers in Piccadilly, furnished with less splendour, it is true, than their owner could have desired; but then they were furnished in the fashion, and the bill was really stupendous.

On the table there lay a note addressed in a lady's handwriting. Olinthus tore it open and read it with a smile of satisfaction.

'I'm an ass and a fool, am I?' he said, after reading the note twice over. 'Yet a Countess asks me to dinner—the young and beautiful widow of an Earl asks such an ass and such a fool to dinner. She doesn't operate, she doesn't want information. She has never asked me to recommend a buyer to a safe thing. Why does she ask me, then?' He looked in the glass and smiled

again. 'Claire,' he said, 'is a very pretty girl, and all that. But a young Countess! and a widow!' he looked in the glass again.

The cause of Mr. Colliber's contempt and wrath was the difficulty he found in coaching his partner for a certain difficult and delicate piece of business which he was just then working up. It was a big thing, a very big thing, and it required to be carried through with great delicacy and coolness; in fact, it was of such great importance that Mr. Colliber made his partner rehearse two scenes at least in his presence, and to rehearse them till he was word-perfect and had been taught the by-play. And yet he knew nothing at all of what was meant.

The business was this. There was once a young Englishman who had a few thousands —a very few. He had also a great aversion to the confinement of an office, and a great love of riding, shooting, fishing, and so forth. There are many such young Englishmen. This young man tried many things; but as

everything begins with an exam., and as he was always plucked, he could find no opening for himself at home, therefore he turned his eyes upon the colonies, which seem to exist especially to meet such cases as his. After consideration, he thought that coffee-planting in Sindbad's Island—named after the discoverer—would afford him a reasonable amount of open air, riding, shooting, fishing, cards, brandy and soda, and cigarettes, combined with business, and he laid out his capital in the purchase of a small coffee estate in that colony, and went out there and began to operate.

Now the planting of coffee is not what it used to be in this colony. For the soil, which was once rich, is now poor and only kept going with guano, and hurricanes are more frequent than they were, and the cost of labour has gone up on the one hand while the price of coffee has gone down on the other. Therefore this young man, who began by paying three times as much for his estate as it was worth, sorrowfully beheld his good money

going after his bad, and his liabilities increase while his crops grew worse. He therefore began to contemplate the possibilities of bankruptcy, and to realise that unless a miracle happened even brandy and soda would become an unattainable article.

Then a miracle did happen. Gold was found in that island—that is to say, gold had always been known to exist, but a speculative and ingenious man turned up who maintained that gold was plentiful enough to be worked for profit.

Delightful! His own estate lay in the auriferous region. He made great haste, filled a sack with ore dug out of his fields, packed in it all the bits which looked most like containing gold, and took his passage home, carrying the precious sack with him. He was not a remarkably clever young man, but he was prudent enough to see that here was a chance—his one chance—such a chance as would never occur again—of selling his estate. And in some way or other—how did he always

find out these things?—Mr. Colliber found out before this young man landed in England what was his errand and what he hoped to do.

It was the coffee-planter with the sack of ore and the estate in the rich auriferous region whom the executive partner was ordered to receive.

The planter kept his appointment, having in his hand a small bag full of stuff which looked like nuggets gone brown. He expected to find a sharp man of business in a dingy office. He found a large, light, and handsomely-furnished room, and a young man, younger than himself, looking the reverse of sharp, with fat cheeks and rather fishy eyes. Never did the appearance of a man so belie his reputation. Yet he had heard such splendid accounts of Mr. Gallaway's ability if once he could be persuaded to take up a thing.

'Now, sir,' said the great financier, with some approach to sharpness, 'let us talk business.' He took out his watch and looked

at it—this was part of the by-play. 'Take that chair. I have got just ten minutes for you. You have an estate to sell I understand—a coffee estate, in which you have lost money.'

'I have—in Sindbad Island.'

'Just so; and luckily for you it is supposed to lie in the auriferous district.'

'It is in the very heart of the rich auriferous district. The ore has been analyzed, and is said to contain——'

'Just so. What will you take for it?'

'I will take,' said the planter, looking his man straight in the face, 'I will take twenty thousand pounds for it.'

He expected to be invited to go away at once, or at least to reconsider his proposal. Quite the contrary, Mr. Gallaway laughed pleasantly.

'Twenty thousand! If I take up the business, we can do better than that for you. Supposing, for instance, that I get you a purchaser for fifty thousand, would you object to my taking fifteen for myself?'

'Of course,' said the vendor, puzzled. 'But—but—then—why don't you buy it yourself, and sell it for what you can get? I offered it to you for twenty thousand.'

'You did. But I do not buy estates,' said Mr. Gallaway. 'That is not my business. Come. Shall I repeat what I said? or do you agree? If I get a purchaser for fifty, you will give me fifteen?'

'Certainly; I agree. It will still be fifteen thousand more than I expected.'

'Considering that the estate only cost you six thousand, you will have done very well. Then that will do. You will hear from me to-morrow. Good morning. I have another appointment immediately.'

This was the first scene of the drama. Mr. Colliber was pleased to approve of his conduct of the affair, so far. Olinthus was next instructed to visit a certain firm with whom he had already had transactions. To this firm, after certain preliminaries, all of them carefully studied beforehand, he offered the estate for 50,000*l.*

'You shall buy this estate,' he said. 'You will leave it to me to get a purchaser for you. If I get you 150,000*l.* for it, you will give me as commission 30,000*l.* for myself. That is business.'

The firm bought that estate; the firm sold it the following week to the Sindbad Island Gold Mining Company (Limited), capital, 200,000*l.* in 200,000 1*l.* shares. And how the great Mr. Gallaway—never so great as when he was operating with a newly-formed company—manipulated the shares and ran them up, and how much this firm made out of that one transaction alone would require a volume in itself to relate. But it was terrible to Olinthus, in the glory which followed the *coup*, to remember that seventy-five per cent. went to the other man.

This was the first great *coup*. I am happy to relate that Olinthus, who was a good son, bought his mother's house for her out of the proceeds, gave her a thousand pounds, and to each of his three sisters a thousand pounds, so

that they all became heiresses on the spot, and shortly afterwards married men in a Steady Way. This was kind of him. He was also extremely benevolent to himself at this period, and never allowed himself to desire anything which he did not immediately buy. Think of buying all you want! The work of promoting companies and dealing with their shares is even more delicate and unintelligible than speculating in stock, but Olinthus found that it was much more lucrative. The British public is never tired of companies; sometimes there is a lull, but only for a short time, and then the game goes on again with undiminished vigour. Mr. Gallaway for his part was instrumental in floating a great many, although people now say that he never promoted a single sound concern. There was the great South American Silver Mine, called the Doña Mercedes. It lies in the Andes and was formerly worked by the Incas of Peru, who abandoned it when they thought they had come to the hard pan; it became a gold mine to Mr. Olinthus Galla-

way. Then there was the North Australian Copper Mine; it is the richest copper mine in the world; it is full of copper, bristling with copper. You can pick up enough copper off the ground to make an antique coal-scuttle; but there is no fuel, and there are no roads, and there is no labour. To Mr. Gallaway that copper mine was also a gold mine. Then there was the Arctic Steam Navigation Company, which bought up a most beautiful fleet of steamers, out of which the owners had already made immense fortunes. In fact they only parted with their steamers because they were grown old and worn out, and generously asked no more for them than they had cost when new, and only received for themselves the posts of managing directors with a percentage on freight in the gross—yet people call Olinthus hard names in connection with this line of steamers. Then there was the company for purchasing and carrying on a most noble business out of which three generations of partners had made fortunes; the present partners only

consented to form the house into a company when it had begun to fall into a rapid decline, for which there was no cure and failure was imminent. They nobly took, when they went out of it, not a penny more than the value of the business when it had been at its best. There was also the railway across the Romney marsh connecting Lydd with Romney, Hythe, and Rye. There was also the Company for developing the trade of the Norfolk Broads. And there were other companies for electric lights, for packet-boats, for tramways, for torpedoes, for telephones, for hotels, for newspapers, and a hundred other things. All these were started, promoted, shoved off by Mr. Gallaway; he underwrote them, he bought and sold their shares, he created a demand for them and got them quoted. One thing Mr. Gallaway never did: he did not become a director, nor did he buy anything, estate, business, or steamers; nor did he in any way at all associate his name publicly with the company, nor was he in the least degree responsible for the statements

made in the prospectus. The sudden acquisition of money made him horribly extravagant in his personal expenditure. This is a very usual result when one has had no money in early life; it comes, I believe, from an exaggerated idea of the pleasure of spending money. Girls, for instance, who seldom have much money of their own, regard the abstract process of buying as one of the most enjoyable things in the world. Fortunately the pleasure does not depend on the amount spent, so that it may be enjoyed as much by the workman's wife when she goes out with her basket on a Saturday evening as by her richer sister driving in her carriage to Swan and Edgar's. As for Olinthus, he enjoyed buying things as much as any girl might do. And he bought continuously, and bought everything that was worthless and costly.

The Village watched his career with interest almost breathless. It was wonderful to believe that one of themselves should become so illustrious. Unfortunately Mr. Colliber, whose

experience and criticism at this juncture would have been of great value, was only at home on Sundays, and came no more to the village-green. And nobody could guess at all what he went to town for. Probably on business connected with his failure.

'I always thought well of the boy,' said Sir Charles, 'ever since the day when he declared that he should imitate my example. It was nobly said. My example! One has not lived in vain.'

'A wise example indeed,' said Mr. Skantlebury.

'I should say he was imitating Mr. Colliber's example,' said Mr. Massey. 'I once hoped that my own son might distinguish himself in the higher walks of finance. Oh, Heaven! What a thing it is! I heard on good authority in the City the other day that Olinthus Gallaway must have made a hundred thousand already.' A waiter in a City dining-room had told him. 'Everything he touches turns to gold. No one knows what a pro-

moter of companies may make. If my son—but he is gone. Why did he go away from London? Why did he leave the place where all the money is? If he had gone to New York, it would have been something. But to go all the way to China!'

'It sometimes occurs to me,' said Mr. Skantlebury softly, 'that perhaps Olinthus—I should say Mr. Olinthus—might put one on to a good thing now and then if he were asked. What do you say, Massey?'

A gleam of light flashed from the eyes of the ingenious Mr. Massey.

The three sisters of Olinthus regarded him with a kind of bewildered awe. How could he have become so clever? As a boy he had bullied them; he was selfish, domineering, dogmatic; he always took the best of everything; he made himself the master of the house. In those days they used to rebel; they used to cry, to call him names, to wish he was gone into the City for good. But how could he have become so clever? Why, he

was a dull boy; he cared nothing about books; he seemed stupid. Now, however, they found it quite natural that one who was going to be so great should in his youth bully his sisters. His stupidity was not real; it was only that he had not found out his line. He conferred honour upon them by coming to visit them; they sat round him and heard him talk of the dinners he gave, the men he invited, the houses he went to, the chambers he lived in, the money he was making. And did he not give them each a *dot*, which meant a sweetheart as well? And did he not buy the house for them? And all of it made out of nothing, by buying what had no existence and selling what he had not got. Was there ever such a brother? And he dined with countesses.

'It is a pity,' said his mother, 'that he will marry Claire. I say nothing against her; and, to be sure, even for the richest man, what she will have when her father dies will come in comfortably. But, my dear, if Olin

thus were to marry the dear Countess! I should really feel his success more—sometimes I think I don't feel it enough—if I were actually to see him drive up to the door with a countess on his arm! Mr. Olinthus Gallaway and the Countess! How well it would sound!'

'Perhaps,' said the eldest, 'Olinthus will not ask Claire any more. You know he is not obliged to.'

'Let us hope he will not,' said his mother.

'Perhaps,' said the youngest, who was a Fool, and was often told so, 'Claire will take one of the others.'

They took all their news to Claire. She heard it with a smile which meant nothing. A strange girl! She knew that he was in love with her, but she never blushed or made any outward signs of confusion when his name was mentioned. Yet she owned that the gift of the *dot* to each of the girls was a kind and generous action. And when they began to hint at the superiority of Olin-

thus over the other two boys she instantly froze.

From time to time Olinthus himself called upon her, and talked of his own surpassing achievements.

'You see, Claire,' he would say, repeating himself, 'I really have done most wonderfully well.'

'You have, indeed, Olinthus.'

'Everybody says there isn't a cleverer man in the City. They do, indeed! I don't tell you that out of boastfulness, but because you don't hear—of course you can't—what goes on in the City, and I want you to know.'

'Your sisters tell me.'

'As for other fellows—fellows of my own standing—there isn't one to show a candle to me; not one, even among Stock Exchange fellows who started with lots of money. If you only knew how much we—I mean—I—made last week.'

'Please do not tell me that. You might turn my head!'

'And, I say, Claire'—he turned very red—'you know, more than a whole year has gone. I promised to wait for three years, I know. But if you could shorten the time——'

'I cannot even talk about it,' Claire said.

'As for that, I believe the Countess would take me—I do, indeed.'

'Then, Olinthus, pray ask the Countess.'

'Now, Claire, don't get up. I did not mean—I assure you I do not really care for——'

She burst out laughing.

'You may laugh if you like. But, now, do listen for a moment. If you come to compare me with the other fellows, where are they? One is a clerk on two or three hundred a year in China. You'll never see him again. And the other's a pauper fellow who writes. By Jove! I saw him the other day going down Piccadilly with a book in his hand, like a shopman, and a shabby old hat. I almost felt inclined to stop my horse and ask him if I could lend him a sovereign, I did indeed.'

'At any rate, I am glad you resisted the temptation,' Claire replied with impatience.

'Oh, yes, of course, it was only a passing thought, you know—poor beggar! Shorten the time, Claire. You're just the age to marry, and just the kind of girl for a rich man. Look here, I'll give you a house in the Cromwell Road, or Lancaster Gate, if you like that better. You shall have your carriage, and your footman and all, you shall, indeed.'

'Finish what you have to say, Olinthus.'

'The Countess will call upon you. She will do anything I tell her. The other day I whispered to her, "Buy Turks;" she did—she bought a lot; and she made a little sweep.'—It will be seen that the Countess had, after all, begun to operate.—'She's truly grateful. When I dined with her the other night there was a lord, and an honourable, and a major, and a couple of real ladies. After dinner we had a little Nap, and then a little baccarat. I lost seventy pounds. What's that? But it is

just to show you, Claire, that you shall go into tip-top society.'

'Thank you very much.'—What did she laugh again for?—'And, Olinthus, if you feel tempted, you know, at any time to ask the Countess, don't let me stand in the way.'

CHAPTER XII.

THE POWER OF SYMPATHY.

ALLEN continued to go to the little house at Bayswater. He went there daily on some pretext—because he had an idea; because he thought Gertrude might have one; to take them somewhere—there are plenty of shows in the early spring; to read with them; simply to sit and talk with them.

When they went to Richmond for the summer, he went too, and lived under the same roof.

There are great possibilities about Richmond even yet, although it is built over, and approached by a dozen lines. You may, with a girl so young and so strong as Isabel, tramp undisturbed over miles of wild park, where the

heron and the wild duck fly over the broad mere, and the rabbits scuttle away through the fern, and the deer look up with suspicion, as you pass. It is a place where you may read poetry or make love—Allen read poetry; where you may sit dreaming while the silence and the sunshine make your heart calm and restful; where you may talk of vast, shadowy, gigantic plans for the future—the conquest of the world—if you are young and your companion be *sympathique*, as Isabel was. Beyond the park are great barren commons, which give one a sense of freedom delightful to feel after months among the houses; they are covered with yellow gorse, among whose flowers there is kept up a continual and restful humming caused by the great fat bumble bees and the heavy drones, who roll in and out among the spikes. A delightful place and a delightful time! It is not so wild as Hainault, but it seems so much farther off from the City and from money. Or there is the river. Isabel could row, and taught Allen. They spent long summer evenings on

the water among the swans and the midges and the lilies, floating along in the twilight, listening to the plash of the current in the leaves and the leap of a fish. It was best when the sun went down and they floated down the river in the twilight. Sometimes they sat in silence, sometimes Allen followed aloud the current of his thoughts. He was still a very young man, although he was three-and twenty; he was still full of thoughts, speculations, and wonder. Such a mind as his never passes out of wonderland into the region where people go about their business, each wrapped in his own concerns, with never a thought of the things around them; he told all his thoughts to Isabel, just as he had told them all to Claire. And there came upon the spirit of the girl a feeling that she was the support and stay of Allen, and a jealousy of that other woman who would take him from her, and have no support or stimulus to give him.

In those days Claire was forgotten—she seemed so far away. Yet to Isabel she was

so near, because she stood between Allen and herself. Of love and its first beginnings, of love's decay and death, of changed heart, which had promised to be so loyal—who can fitly speak?

The summer passed away; Allen went not once to Hainault. He wrote, it is true. Was it Claire's quick fancy, or were the letters constrained and forced?

'Isabel, I have had a blissful time,' said Allen, when the day came for their return. 'It has been one long basking in the sunshine—save for the confounded Organ. How can I thank you for making me so happy?'

'It is enough,' she said, with a slight blush in her cheek and a quickened light in her eye; 'it is enough, for us, that you have been happy.'

'I go back,' he went on, 'to carry out some of our plans.'

'Your plans, Allen, not mine.'

'Yes, yours; we have talked them over together. Our plans, Isabel. Let me associate

the work, if it is done worthily, with the memory of our summer holiday together.'

He spoke loftily, as if the plans were the concern of the universal world. They were, indeed, vast enough; but they were, unfortunately, vague. Yet he was not making love. He was simply happy with his new-made friends. He was so far true to Claire that he had no thought of love. He was also, so far, stupid and inexperienced.

'You spoil me, Gertrude,' he said one day. 'You make me continually talk about my own work and myself. It is your fault if I am an egoist. I will write a poem about the man who was spoiled by kindness. Do you remember Coppée's poem about the child who was picked up by two old men, and killed by their excessive love and kindness? You picked me up, you see, and you have been so kind that I have become full of my own importance. Yet I am only a bladder blown out with wind.'

'Every poet is an egoist, my dear,' said Gertrude. 'It is allowed him, and we think it is admirable.'

But the holiday came to an end, and Allen returned to his own lodgings, and began to think about those vast schemes of work which were to be accomplished.

'Has it been wise, Gertrude?' asked Lawrence, concerning this holiday. He thought of Isabel; but she thought of Allen.

'I think so, Lawrence. He has learned a great deal; indeed, he learns with great quickness; he can talk well now—even brilliantly; he knows the small change of conversation; he represses his enthusiasms, and yet he has not lost them.'

'He is not likely to lose them, with you.'

'Take him now, Lawrence, and make him work. He wants your stimulus after our sympathy; he dreams too much. Isabel could give him both stimulus and sympathy. But then, you see, we must consider that she could

not be always giving them to a man already engaged.'

'Is Engledew engaged?'

'As good as engaged.'

'Which is, perhaps, another reason,' said Lawrence, 'why he should not be allowed to go about quite so much with Isabel.'

'The child has no thought,' Gertrude replied, 'of such a thing. Indeed, Lawrence, you do her wrong.'

He shook his head with preternatural wisdom and went his way. But he waited an opportunity to find Isabel alone, and then he spoke to her cautiously. He talked of their summer holiday and of Allen. She answered him, without any blushing or confusion, in her quiet way. Allen stayed with them, she said; they were together all day long; they read poetry and talked over all kinds of literary plans. They had a very delightful time.

'Is he really engaged, Isabel?' he asked. 'If so, do you think she would like it?'

She blushed at this unexpected thrust.

'He has proposed to a young lady who will give him an answer in a year or two. Why do you ask, Lawrence?'

'There was a time, Isabel,' he replied, 'when there was another young man who might have asked for sympathy.'

'You, Lawrence?' she laughed, but not freely. 'But one cannot give sympathy to a mathematician.'

'But you can to men who make literature.'

'Of course.'

'Then, Isabel, you may give it to me, if you can. I am also—even I—of the literary trade. Yes; do not look astonished. Listen. My science is a sham and a flam and a humbug. I am a writer of tales and things, as my father and my mother and all the rest of them were before me.'

'You, Lawrence?'

'Even I. What will Gertrude say?'

'You to write stories, Lawrence? You, the only man of clear head in the family? Oh! it is impossible.'

'Stories in prose and verse, Isabel. I have even sent things to a comic paper. Comediettas, feuilletons, *vers de société*, all, I produce. It has been on my conscience for a long time, but I never before had so good an opportunity of telling my secret.'

'Oh!' she gasped, 'you—too!'

'It is like gout or early baldness. You can't get it out of the blood. Now, Isabel, for some of that sympathy which you give this fellow Engledew.'

She laughed and blushed.

'Shall I row you in the evening in the Serpentine? Shall we walk together in the Gardens? Shall we sit on a pair of penny chairs side by side beneath the trees? I have many plans to tell you. I am full of thoughts. I can even read you my poetry.'

She blushed again. Mephistopheles himself could not more artfully have conveyed to Isabel the plain truth, which she would have hidden.

'Sympathy can only be given to a sympathetic subject,' said the girl.

'I have been a great fool, Isabel,' said Lawrence, 'I thought any time would do.' Here Isabel blushed again. 'I thought it was safe to wait. Now you may rest easy, Isabel. I shall say no more about it unless, in a year or two, this shadowy young lady—whom Allen once thought he loved—says yes.'

Isabel gave him her hand.

'You are always considerate, Lawrence,' she said. 'Please never say anything more about it at all, because it will be impossible, even though that young lady should say yes—which, of course, she is sure to do.'

'Why is she sure?'

'Why? Oh! Lawrence. The other two who proposed at the same time are City men. Would any girl take a City man? Think of it—a money-making man, a man who buys and sells, when she might have a poet—like Allen?'

CHAPTER XIII.

TELL ME WHAT.

'ENGLEDEW,' said Lawrence, that very same day, 'let us have it out. You have been wasting your time all the summer.'

'I know I have,' Allen replied. 'But I have come back to work.'

'Gertrude is sentimental; if you go there too much you will become flabby. Man's work and woman's work are different. You must keep your work out of that house. Come to my club and see the men who work. They do not hang about apron-strings.'

There is a table d'hôte at that club every evening. The tables on this evening were full.

'Look round you,' said Lawrence, who knew them all. 'Three-fourths of these men

are writing-men. Most of them are journalists. There are one or two novelists among them, and some are specialists. If you listen to their talk you will hear nothing about the glory of their work, and they are mere Sadducees about its immortality.'

If you think of it you cannot draw any face which shall immediately be recognised as that of the *littérateur*. Perhaps his characteristic face has not yet been determined by long generations of work. The profession is the youngest of the learned callings. One can draw for one's self the typical solicitor, the typical barrister, the typical clerk, the typical physician, the typical Ritualist even; but the typical literary man has not yet been figured. Mostly, however, he wears spectacles or *pince-nez*.

'There are,' said Lawrence, presently, 'fourteen thousand persons who live by literature in London. Fourteen thousand! How many of them succeed in the way you would call success?'

'Why this preamble?' asked Allen.

'Because the time has come when you must make your spoon or spoil that horn. You have got to do as well as the half-dozen best of those fourteen thousand men and women. That seems a considerable ambition, doesn't it? Because, you see, you take it seriously. As for me, I take it carelessly. I write my little comedies, and they get printed, and I am paid. I am content. Life should be made up of a little light comedy, a little love-making, a few epigrams, a little champagne, and a little verse-making. That is enough for me. You, glutton that you are, want to do good work and get what you call fame. You won't get much by magazine articles on French poets.'

Allen replied not.

'You must be a dramatist, or a novelist, or both. Go at it, therefore, hard, as if you were going at physic or the law. Gertrude has done a good deal for you, now go and do the rest yourself.'

It was true. Lawrence's words implied a great deal more than appeared on the surface.

'I know,' said Allen, humbly, 'what you and your friends have done for me. It seems incredible to me that I could have dared, being so ignorant of the world, even to dream of success. I know more now, but——' he sighed, 'what is the use of knowledge if it is only to make one feel one's insignificance?'

'No man,' said Lawrence, as wise as Solomon, 'is insignificant who can write, and has ideas. As for knowledge, you know everything that was to be learned, except what your friend, the Frenchman, could not teach you—the ways of the social world. Isabel has told me something of your plans. Was it pleasant to dream away a summer on the river with a pretty girl? You poets get the best of everything. Up, dreamer.' He laid his hand upon Allen's shoulder. 'Go and work.'

He went away uneasy, dissatisfied, waiting

for inspiration, his brain filled with vast fabrics which crumbled to dust when they were touched—a romance, which should be a joy for ever; a great and magnificent play, which should never leave the stage—do we not know the poet who wants a great subject, the painter who has got a beautiful piece of canvas on his easel but cannot decide what to fill it with?

He was so restless that he found the house at Bayswater intolerable. Gertrude's reverence for literature made him feel like an arrogant pretender. Isabel's questioning eyes seemed to reproach him for having done nothing, whereas she only wondered what was troubling him. He was so restless that he was fain to the Forest and seek consolation of Claire.

She might have had a great deal to tell him, but he asked for no news of herself; she might have shown him her new house and all her pretty new things, but he regarded them not, being full of his own trouble. She was more beautiful than before, but he paid no heed

to her beauty; the sunshine of good fortune lay upon her face, it had lost the line of care which always settles on the forehead of women who do daily work, but he saw it not; she was sympathetic, and he took, without returning, all the sympathy which she had to give. In such a frame of mind a poet is sublimely selfish. Perhaps, as Gertrude said, it is allowed to him.

'Tell me, Allen,' she said, 'what it is.'

He had come for consolation, but it was necessary to explain why, and he could not explain. How tell anybody, even Claire, that he was burning to write a splendid thing, and was miserable because the way was not yet clear? The sunshine of September lay upon the gentle slopes and the old trees of the Forest, but it might as well have been a day in November; Claire was holding his hand and looking into his face with her sweet, frank eyes, but he saw and felt nothing.

'Are you not satisfied with what you have

done, Allen?' she asked. 'Yet it seems to me so good a beginning.'

I believe there is nothing more wretched, more humiliating, than the feeling that you are not, and never can be, the one thing in the world you ardently desire to be.

'I am not satisfied,' he broke out. 'Oh, Claire, what things I hoped to do! And see —— Nothing. Half-a-dozen papers. That— and the confounded Leather Organ.'

He left her abruptly without another word, and strode off through the Forest.

Claire looked to see him return in the evening, and made a little feast for him, and her father promised sympathy with the work. They waited dinner till the sun went down at eight, but he came not; for he was walking, dinnerless, full of a kind of rage as of one who possesses a great art yet cannot exercise it, along the road to Abridge, and from there along the north of Epping Forest to Copt Hall, and so by a long round to Chingford, where he took

the train to London, and went home and to bed, tired, angry, and horribly hungry.

For Claire could not help him. Sympathy will not make a man succeed; he must work, he repeated. And what to do? He must work, or he must creep back to his own place and die in obscurity.

CHAPTER XIV.

IT IS THIS.

Relief came to him after many days. One evening it chanced that his restless feet carried him to that broad thoroughfare which runs through Islington. It reminded him of Whitechapel; it was a busy and crowded time, between nine and ten. The day had been hot, it was in early autumn; the people streamed along the pavement in a never-ending procession; the workmen lounging with pipes in their mouths, the workgirls hastening as if there was not a moment to be lost, and talking to each other as they went in voices of exasperation; the married women carried baskets; there was the bustle, turmoil, toil, and roll of the streets, which he remembered of those days when with

Will he roamed about the place. The years rolled backwards, the old thoughts returned to him: if one could only keep the magnificent thoughts which come to boys and to early manhood! if one could only remember them in part! To Allen it seemed suddenly as if he had been forgetting or neglecting the only thing worth following. His brained reeled, he was fain to stop and lean beside a lamp-post. Then he stood still and watched. And then there befell him, again, a strange and wondrous thing; the crowds of people became a long and never-ending procession of human faces. He gazed upon each as they passed him by; there were faces worn, faces sad, faces eager, faces anxious, faces sensual, faces pure, faces young, faces old, faces animal-like, vulture-like, snake-like, ape-like, leonine; faces remorseful, faces expectant, faces conscious, faces doomed—where were the happy faces gone?

Then there fell upon him a strange feeling, which seemed as if it was an old feeling, and that he must have felt it once before—of

trouble and sympathy; each face in the long procession was *alone*; it looked neither to the right nor to the left, it looked straight before as it went past him. And while he looked and felt no surprise or wonder, save that he should have waited so long for this thing to happen to him, he saw among the multitude one face that he knew and remembered. Alas! he had forgotten that face too long. This face turned and looked straight in his eyes; he saw the rest no more, but followed, walking side by side.

It was the face of the girl whom he had seen so long ago and forgotten; but then she was younger, and her features—like those of a girl at fifteen—hardly formed; and her figure was then indistinct, a thing of sun and shadow. Now, she was fully grown and shapely; he saw that she had sweet eyes, large and beautiful, but they were full of tears and wonder and reproach. She asked him why he had neglected her so long; she said that she had been waiting and looking for him; then she took him by the hand and led him along the road

among the passengers, who made way for her though she was but a spectre of Allen's brain; and she talked with him; her voice was low, yet he heard it above the roll of the carriages. He listened as she spoke; he had heard her story before; but never before had he realised the strength of it, the sorrow of it, the splendour of it. While she told it, with details which before he knew not of, with surroundings which before he had not understood, he heard another voice which said, 'All your verses, all your essays, are foolish things. Listen to this girl's story.' He listened—he heard that story told all over again from the beginning; he saw that when he heard it before he could not wholly comprehend it; now he understood all. And he knew that he was going to do a splendid thing, because he felt and saw that it would be a real thing. How simple it seems and yet how hard it is—to see the truth!

He went home; he could not rest; the story of that girl fired his brain. It had been

lying there, forgotten, for three years; it had grown without his knowledge; it had been fed and nourished by every walk he took in the streets of London, by every conversation which took him out of books and taught him something of life. And suddenly it had sprung up fully grown; it was a tale now of genuine flesh and blood, warm, natural, full of love and passion, hope and fear. Oh! wise Hector! Oh! great philosopher! thus to discern that the best part of education lies outside the wisdom of books!

Yes; it was a great thing he was going to do. As he paced his room the story unrolled itself: he seemed to see, actually before his eyes, the scenes he was going to describe; he heard the voices of his characters; he laughed and wept; he threw his arms about and acted the story; in dumb show he played it, without words he constructed it.

Happy the man who thus beholds, almost in the flesh, the creatures of his imagination; happy he who is possessed by a story. Allen

had found among the meanest streets of the meanest part of London a rose of maidenhood, as tender, as true, as sweet as if she had been the descendant of a hundred earls. It was not to be a story with the false, old, foolish ring of the wicked duke and the virtuous dressmaker, but a real story, with human life and love and shattered hopes, and the suffering of the innocent for the sins of the fathers and mothers, of women for the sins of men.

But, as yet, it was not written. In fact, Allen discovered—a great many people have made this discovery—that it is not enough to conceive a story, enough even to work it all out in your own mind, so that you know perfectly all your characters, with their faces and figures and secret thoughts: the difficulty is to shape it in dramatic form, and, above all, to begin it. You know how Hector Philipon was seized with that great thought of his which so mightily buffeted him. As were Hector's struggles, so were Allen's. The babe was ready for the birth, but the hour of travail was

not yet come. In the telling of a tale, well begun is half done. You may be dull in your second chapter—in fact, you are pretty sure to be dull, because things have got to be explained—but to be dull in the first chapter is, indeed, a fatal thing.

Allen made a hundred different attempts to begin his story—a hundred times he tore up his work disgusted; it was as if his heroine was imploring him, with entreaties which could not be denied, to tell her story, yet he could not.

There was once a man who, like Allen, had conceived a story; like him, he could not begin it. I think he could never fit a name to his leading character, which was the principal reason why he did not begin it. Now, by reason of long waiting, his story dried up in that man's brain, and as it dried it killed, somehow, all the firm qualities of that brain, so that it became incapable of any more good work at all, and finally went soft. And the poor man had to be locked in a little room of a great

house. They said it was hard work, but that was not the case—it was Suppressed Story, which is as fatal as Suppressed Gout.'

Allen reached that point when his story must be told or else it would begin to dry up and so destroy his brain. If that had happened, I suppose he would have presently returned to the Forest and wandered about for the rest of his days playing a melancholy strain upon an oaten pipe, a blighted shepherd. Fortunately, the moment came when the struggle ceased and the tale could be told. He wrote it in a kind of rapture, working without pause or rest, even neglecting the Organ. He wrote, without correction or revision, chapter by chapter, until it was finished. And then he put his manuscript away and returned to the streets, as one might seek the fountains of Helicon. He walked about, now, watching the people with a purpose—he wanted to know more exactly how they talked, what they said, what they thought, what they did, even how they were dressed. There is no detail in the

comedy of Humanity too small to be noted; nothing, hardly, that cannot be quoted, described, or suggested.

After a week or so he returned to his story and wrote it all over again, every word. Before, it had been an outline sketch; now, he made it a picture. He might add touches here and there, but it was finished; he could do but little more to improve it. He put it away, his mind at rest, and began, with interest, the study of another French poet.

A strange thing happened to him then. The girl whose story he had written, who had been living in his brain so long, suddenly vanished clean away and died completely out of his mind; if he thought of her at all it was as of a person in some far-off country whom in olden time he had known, much as an honest tar, all of the olden time, with a wife in every port, might while at Wapping think of his wife at Calcutta. Nor did he, for the time, even look at his manuscript again.

I do not think that Allen will ever know a

happiness greater than that which he enjoyed during this time when the fountain he had opened ran with a swift and steady stream full and clear. Other writers have shown us the rustic life with the rustic speech; others have shown sailor's life, soldier's life, artist life, society life, clerical life, all kinds of life. Allen was the first to portray the life which seems so monotonous and so mean, yet is so full of possibilities, so varied in its types. Not for nothing had Allen tramped those thousands of miles with Will and listened everywhere for the voice of the People. He had found it at last.

Allen kept his story a secret. He would tell nobody, not even Isabel. After a time he took it to his friendly editor, who received it without any enthusiasm and with obvious distrust. He said that such things are a drug in the market—which is only true of bad stories—and he told Allen that really he had better stick to his own line of light and appreciative criticism. So great a pity for a man to go

outside his line! And he presently sent the story back, and Allen was perfectly certain that he had not taken the trouble to turn over the pages. Now he knew very well that this monthly magazine was always wanting good tales, and he knew that his own was good, and that if his editor could only be got to read it dispassionately he would take it with joy. He therefore invented a little plot, for the carrying out of which he secured the services and secrecy of his old friend, the foreman.

He had the story set up in type, the same type as that used for the magazine, and when the next packet of proof was sent to the editor he contrived that his story should be sent by mistake with them. The editor received his proofs and presently read the story. Now, when it was read, that editor fell into a strange doubt and trouble of soul; for he could not remember, for the life of him, that he had ever read the MS. of that story. Yet it was a good story, an excellent story, one of the best stories he had ever read. The more he read it the

more he was struck with its power. He took it home with him and showed it to his wife. The influence of woman in editorial is as great as in political circles—only it is not yet suspected. His wife said it really was a most powerful and real story.

He then sent to the printer for the manuscript and name of the author. The foreman came himself to explain that it was the work of Mr. Engledew, who had had the tale set up for himself, and that it was, he added mendaciously, a mistake of his own, which he deeply deplored.

Then the editor saw that he had been the victim of a heartless deception, and would have wept had he not been too busy. He therefore wrote to Allen asking for the use of that story; and when, a few days afterwards, he gave Allen an excellent dinner at the club, he refrained from any words which might lead his guest to guess that he was discovered.

This was the beginning; this the way in which Allen found—himself. The rest was

easy, though it might take time, because, with a short story of twenty or thirty pages, one does not advance at once to that enviable level at which one finds editors holding out their hands and asking—positively asking—for contributions.

'Allen,' cried Gertrude with effusion, 'I congratulate you. My dear, you have made a noble beginning in the best of all ways. We are proud of you.'

'I kept it a secret,' said Allen, 'because I was resolved that if I failed I would go away and never come near you any more. I would treat myself as an impostor.'

'Never come near us again! Why, Allen, my first three novels all failed, but yet I persevered. And you—oh! my dear, mine were poor things, indeed, compared with what yours will be. Go away? Why, what little faith is here!'

'What does Claire say?' asked Isabel quickly.

'I have not seen her yet,' said Allen. 'I am going to see her to-morrow.'

'As a beginning,' said Hector, 'you have written verses. All men of genius write verses. Most abandon them. You have studied human life; you, therefore, in the next place tell a story. Most men of genius tell stories. You may next advance to the better work.'

'Better work?' asked Allen blankly. 'What better work?'

'You ask?' Hector replied. 'You who know what the people want?'

'How should I know what they want?' said Allen impatiently.

'How else could you write this story?'

This question ought to have afforded the young writer boundless satisfaction. There is this quality in a good work of art, that it tells more to those who study it than to him who made it. Hector read this story, and forthwith began to consider it from points of view not contemplated by the writer, and

especially as if it was designed with a view to things practical.

'Why,' he replied, 'I was telling the story of a girl. What else was I doing?'

'You had no purpose, no design in studying this—model?'

'I told her story. What more? When I had told it she—she went away.'

He appealed to Claire with a puzzled look of disappointment. What did her father mean?

'Tell Allen, *mon père*,' said Claire, 'that you are proud of him.'

'I am—proud,' said Hector with a gulp. 'You are satisfied with your art, Allen?'

'I am more than satisfied,' he replied.

Hector sat down. He had then failed. Claire looked at him with imploring eyes. Allen, alone, of the three understood nothing. Then Hector rose again and began to speak, addressing the whole world.

'Is it,' he asked, 'that the artist thinks of nothing but his work? When Raphael painted a beautiful woman, did he not fall in love with

her? When Dante wrote the "Inferno," did he drop no tears for the unhappy, or did he think of rhyme and phrase? It is a magnificent world—for the artist. Allen, you have a splendid chance before you. For you know the *prolétaire*. He is at your feet. You have heard his cries; you know his voice; you know his pains. Take your sketch-book with you. Behold! There is a boy in rags—ah, pretty boy with rags and dirt, and uncombed hair, and hungry eyes. You paint him. Ah! What genius! What a portrait! Let us go on, we are artists—all the Levites followed that profession—let us go on. Is that not the girl you have already drawn? You have forgotten her already? Yet you painted her only a week ago. Her eyes are as full of tears, and her heart is as heavy as then. The poor girl! The poor girl! Here they come, all of them—the thin man who asks questions—a dangerous man; the brute man who drinks rum and kicks his wife—you can easily draw him; *enfin*, the whole procession of those who toil. Make

your sketches, listen to their talk. Let your work be faithful. Oh, it is great! It is noble! Art is the only thing worth following.'

'My master!' cried Allen, overwhelmed.

Claire breathed freely. Allen had not seen the delicate satire of the words. Afterwards he might remember, but now he was too full of his story and its success.

'Allen,' Hector added, 'I have made a mistake. I dreamed that you might become a Luther. Happy boy! You have become, instead—a Lamartine.'

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